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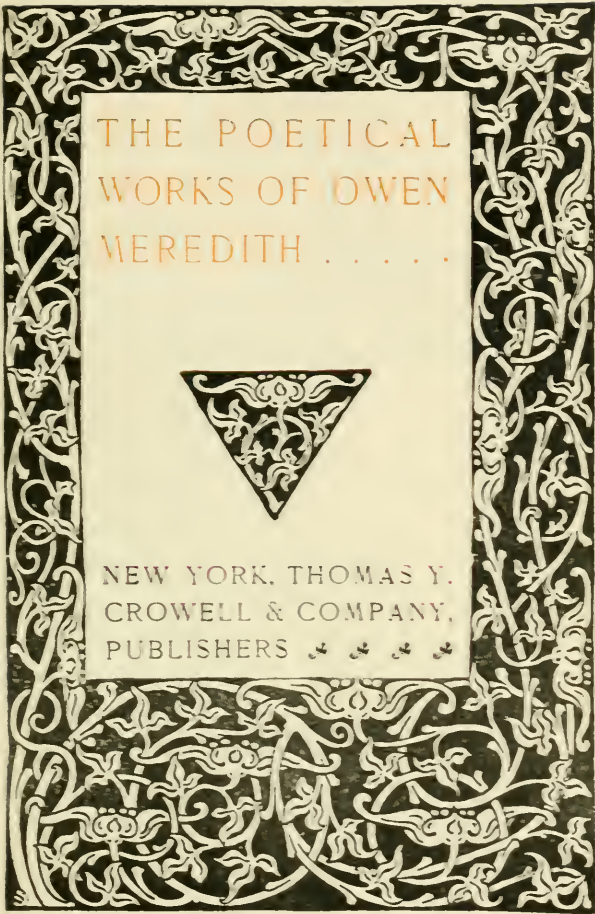




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THE EARL OF LYTTON.



THE POETICAL  
WORKS OF OWEN  
MEREDITH . . . . .



NEW YORK, THOMAS Y.  
CROWELL & COMPANY,  
PUBLISHERS \* \* \* \*





THE POETICAL WORKS

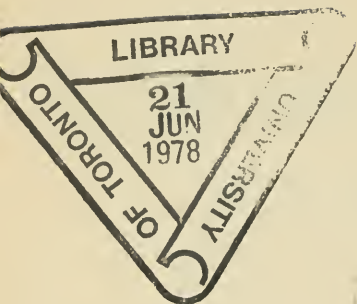
OF

OWEN MEREDITH

(ROBERT LORD LYTTON)

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NEW YORK  
THOMAS Y. CROWELL & COMPANY  
PUBLISHERS



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# LUCILE.

## Dedication.

### TO MY FATHER.

I DEDICATE to you a work, which is submitted to the public with a diffidence and hesitation proportioned to the novelty of the effort it represents. For in this poem I have abandoned those forms of verse with which I had most familiarized my thoughts, and have endeavored to follow a path on which I could discover no footprints before me, either to guide or to warn.

There is a moment of profound discouragement which succeeds to prolonged effort; when, the labor which has become a habit having ceased, we miss the sustaining sense of its championship, and stand, with a feeling of strangeness and embarrassment, before the abrupt and naked result. As regards myself, in the present instance, the force of all such sensations is increased by the circumstances to which I have referred. And in this moment of discouragement and doubt my heart instinctively turns to you, from whom it has so often sought, from whom it has never failed to receive, support.

I do not inscribe to you this book because it contains anything that is worthy of the beloved and honored name with which I thus seek to associate it: nor yet, because I would avail myself of a vulgar pretext to display in public an affection that is best honored by the silence which it renders sacred.

Feelings only such as those with which, in days when there existed for me no critic less gentle than yourself, I brought to you my childish manuscripts, — feelings only such as those which have, in later years, associated with your heart all that has moved or occupied my own, — lead me once more to seek assurance from the grasp of that hand which has hitherto been my guide and comfort through the life I owe to you.

And as in childhood, when existence had no toil beyond the day's simple lesson, no ambition beyond the neighboring approval of the night I brought to you the morning's task for the evening's sanction, so now I bring to you this self-appointed task-work of maturer years; less confident indeed of your approval, but not less confident of your love; and anxious only to realize your presence between myself and the public, and to mingle with those severer voices to whose final sentence I submit my work the beloved and gracious accents of your own.

OWEN MEREDITH.

## PART I.

### CANTO I.

#### I.

*Letter from the* COMTESSE DE NEVERS *to* LORD ALFRED VARGRAVE.

"I HEAR from Bigorre you are there.

I am told

You are going to marry Miss Darcy.

Of old, [ten it now,

So long since you may have forgotten—  
(When we parted as friends, soon mere strangers to grow.)

Your last words recorded a pledge  
— what you will —

A promise — the time has now come  
to fulfil.

The letters I ask you, my lord, to  
return,

I desire to receive from your hand.

You discern

My reasons, which, therefore, I  
need not explain.

The distance to Luchon is short I  
remain

A month in these mountains Miss  
 Darcy, perchance,  
 Will forego one brief page from the  
 summer romance  
 Of her courtship, and spare you one  
 day from your place  
 At her feet, in the light of her fair  
 English face.  
 I desire nothing more, and I trust  
 you will feel  
 I desire nothing much.

“Your friend always,

“LUCILE.”

II.

Now in May Fair, of course, — in  
 the fair month of May, —  
 When life is abundant, and busy,  
 and gay :  
 When the markets of London are  
 noisy about  
 Young ladies, and strawberries, —  
 “only just out :”  
 Fresh strawberries sold under all  
 the house-eaves,  
 And young ladies on sale for the  
 strawberry leaves :  
 When cards, invitations, and three-  
 cornered notes  
 Fly about like white butterflies, —  
 gay little notes  
 In the sunbeam of Fashion; and  
 even Blue Books  
 Take a heavy-winged flight, and  
 grow busy as rooks ;  
 And the postman (that Genius, in-  
 different and stern,  
 Who shakes out even-handed to all,  
 from his urn,  
 Those lots which so often decide if  
 our day  
 Shall be fretful and anxious, or joy-  
 ous and gay),  
 Brings, each morning, more letters  
 of one sort or other  
 Than Cadmus himself put together,  
 to bother  
 The heads of Hellenes; — I say, in  
 the season  
 Of Fair May, in May Fair, there can  
 be no reason

Why, when quietly munching your  
 dry-toast and butter,  
 Your nerves should be suddenly  
 thrown in a flutter  
 At the sight of a neat little letter,  
 addressed  
 In a woman’s handwriting, contain-  
 ing, half guessed,  
 An odor of violets faint as the  
 Spring,  
 And coquettishly sealed with a small  
 signet-ring.  
 But in Autumn, the season of some-  
 bre reflection,  
 When a damp day, at breakfast, be-  
 gins with dejection ;  
 Far from London and Paris, and ill  
 at one’s ease, [nees,  
 Away in the heart of the blue Pyre-  
 Where a call from the doctor, a  
 stroll to the bath,  
 A ride through the hills on a hack  
 like a lath,  
 A cigar, a French novel, a tedious  
 flirtation,  
 Are all a man finds for his day’s oc-  
 cupation,  
 The whole case, believe me, is total-  
 ly changed,  
 And a letter may alter the plans we  
 arranged  
 Over-night, for the slaughter of  
 Time, — a wild beast,  
 Which, though classified yet by no  
 naturalist,  
 Abounds in these mountains, more  
 hard to ensnare,  
 And more mischievous, too, than  
 the lynx or the bear.

III.

I marvel less, therefore, that, having  
 already  
 Torn open this note, with a hand  
 most unsteady,  
 Lord Alfred was startled.  
 The month is September ;  
 Time, morning; the scene at Bi-  
 gorre; (pray remember  
 These facts, gentle reader, because  
 I intend

To fling all the unities by at the end.)  
 He walked to the window. The  
 morning was chill:  
 The brown woods were crisped in  
 the cold on the hill:  
 The sole thing abroad in the streets  
 was the wind;  
 And the straws on the gust, like the  
 thoughts in his mind,  
 Rose, and eddied around and around,  
 as though teasing  
 Each other. The prospect, in truth,  
 was unpleasing:  
 And Lord Alfred, whilst moodily  
 gazing around it,  
 To himself more than once (vexed  
 in soul) sighed  
 . . . "Confound it!"

## IV.

What the thoughts were which led  
 to this bad interjection,  
 Sir, or Madam, I leave to your fut-  
 ure detection;  
 For whatever they were, they were  
 burst in upon,  
 As the door was burst through, by  
 my lord's Cousin John.

## COUSIN JOHN.

A fool, Alfred, a fool, a most mot-  
 ley fool!

## LORD ALFRED.

Who?

## JOHN.

The man who has anything better  
 to do;  
 And yet so far forgets himself, so  
 far degrades  
 His position as Man, to this worst  
 of all trades,  
 Which even a well-brought-up ape  
 were above,  
 To travel about with a woman in  
 love, —  
 Unless she's in love with himself.

## ALFRED.

Indeed! why  
 Are you there then, dear Jack?

## JOHN.

Can't you guess it?

## ALFRED.

Not I.

## JOHN.

Because I *have* nothing that's better  
 to do.

I had rather be bored, my dear Al-  
 fred, by you,

On the whole (I must own), than  
 be bored by myself.

That perverse, imperturbable,  
 golden-haired elf —

Your Will-o'-the-wisp — that has led  
 you and me

Such a dance through these hills —

## ALFRED.

Who, Matilda?

## JOHN.

Yes! she,

Of course! who but she could con-  
 trive so to keep

One's eyes, and one's feet too, from  
 falling asleep

For even one-half hour of the long  
 twenty-four?

## ALFRED.

What's the matter?

## JOHN.

Why, she is — a matter, the more  
 I consider about it, the more it de-  
 mands

An attention it does not deserve;  
 and expands

Beyond the dimensions which ever  
 crinoline,

When possessed by a fair face and  
 saucy Eighteen,

Is entitled to take in this very small  
 star,

Already too crowded, as *I* think, by  
 far.

You read Malthus and Sadler?

## ALFRED.

Of course.

JOHN.

To what use,  
When you countenance, calmly,  
such monstrous abuse  
Of one mere human creature's legiti-  
mate space  
In this world? Mars, Apollo, Viro-  
rum! the case  
Wholly passes my patience.

ALFRED.

My own is worse tried.

JOHN.

Yours, Alfred?

ALFRED.

Read this, if you doubt, and decide.

JOHN (*reading the letter*).

"I hear from Bigorre you are there.  
I am told

You are going to marry Miss Darcy.  
Of old—"

What is this?

ALFRED.

Read it on to the end, and you'll  
know.

JOHN (*continues reading*).

"When we parted, your last words  
recorded a vow—  
What you will" . . .

Hang it! this smells all over, I  
swear,  
Of adventures and violets. Was it  
your hair  
You promised a lock of?

ALFRED.

Read on. You'll discern.

JOHN (*continues*).

"Those letters I ask you, my lord, to  
return." . . .

Humph! . . . Letters! . . . the  
matter is worse than I guessed;  
I have my misgivings—

ALFRED.

Well, read out the rest,  
And advise.

JOHN.

Eh? . . . Where was I? . . .

(*Continues.*)

"Miss Darcy, perchance,  
Will forego one brief page from the  
summer romance  
Of her courtship." . . .

Egad! a romance, for my part,  
I'd forego every page of, and not  
break my heart!

ALFRED.

Continue!

JOHN (*reading*).

"And spare you one day from your  
place  
At her feet." . . .

Pray forgive me the passing grim-  
ace.

I wish you had my place!

(*Reads.*)

"I trust you will feel  
I desire nothing much. Your  
friend" . . .

Bless me! "Lucile"?  
The Comtesse de Nevers?

ALFRED.

Yes.

JOHN.

What will you do?

ALFRED.

You ask me just what I would rather  
ask you.

JOHN.

You can't go.

ALFRED.

I must.

JOHN.

And Matilda?

ALFRED.

O, that  
You must manage!

JOHN.

Must I? I decline it, though, flat.  
In an hour the horses will be at the  
door,



And Matilda is now in her habit.

Before  
I have finished my breakfast, of  
course I receive

A message for "*dear Cousin John!*"  
. . . I must leave

At the jeweller's the bracelet which  
*you* broke last night;

I must call for the music. "Dear  
Alfred is right:

The black shawl looks best: *will* I  
change it? Of course

I can just stop, in passing, to order  
the horse.

Then Beau has the mumps, or St.  
Hubert knows what;

*Will* I see the dog-doctor?" Hang  
Beau! I will *not*.

ALFRED.

Tush, tush! this is serious.

JOHN.

It is.

ALFRED.

Very well,

You must think—

JOHN.

What excuse will you make, though?

ALFRED.

O, tell

Mrs. Darcy that . . . lend me your  
wits, Jack! . . . the deuce!

Can you not stretch your genius to  
fit a friend's use?

Excuses are clothes which, when  
asked unawares,

Good Breeding to naked Necessity  
spares.

You must have a whole wardrobe,  
no doubt.

JOHN.

My dear fellow!

Matilda is jealous, you know, as  
Othello.

ALFRED.

You joke.

JOHN.

I am serious. Why go to Luchon?

ALFRED.

Don't ask me. I have not a choice,  
my dear John.

Besides, shall I own a strange sort  
of desire,

Before I extinguish forever the fire  
Of youth and romance, in whose  
shadowy light

Hope whispered her first fairy tales,  
to excite

The last spark, till it rise, and fade  
far in that dawn

Of my days where the twilights of  
life were first drawn

By the rosy, reluctant auroras of  
Love;

In short, from the dead Past the  
gravestone to move;

Of the years long departed forever  
to take

One last look, one final farewell, to  
awake

The Heroic of youth from the Hades  
of joy,

And once more be, though but for  
an hour, Jack—a boy!

JOHN.

You had better go hang yourself.

ALFRED.

No! were it but

To make sure that the Past from  
the Future is shut,

It were worth the step back. Do  
you think we should live

With the living so lightly, and learn  
to survive

That wild moment in which to the  
grave and its gloom

We consigned our heart's best, if  
the doors of the tomb

Were not locked with a key which  
Fate keeps for our sake?

If the dead could return, or the  
corpses awake?

JOHN.

Nonsense!

ALFRED.

Not wholly. The man who gets up  
 A filled guest from the banquet, and  
 drains off his cup,  
 Sees the last lamp extinguished with  
 cheerfulness, goes  
 Well contented to bed, and enjoys  
 its repose.  
 But he who hath supped at the  
 tables of kings,  
 And yet starved in the sight of lux-  
 urious things;  
 Who hath watched the wine flow,  
 by himself but half tasted,  
 Heard the music, and yet missed the  
 tune; who hath wasted  
 One part of life's grand possibili-  
 ties; — friend,  
 That man will bear with him, be  
 sure, to the end,  
 A blighted experience, a rancor  
 within:  
 You may call it a virtue, I call it a  
 sin.

JOHN.

I see you remember the cynical story  
 Of that wicked old piece of Experi-  
 ence — a hoary  
 Lothario, whom dying, the priest by  
 his bed  
 (Knowing well the unprincipled life  
 he had led,  
 And observing, with no small amount  
 of surprise,  
 Resignation and calm in the old  
 sinner's eyes)  
 Asked if he had nothing that  
 weighed on his mind:  
 "Well, . . . no," says Lothario, "I  
 think not. I find  
 On reviewing my life, which in most  
 things was pleasant,  
 I never neglected, when once it was  
 present,  
 An occasion of pleasing myself. On  
 the whole,  
 I have naught to regret"; . . . and  
 so, smiling, his soul  
 Took its flight from this world.

ALFRED.

Well, Regret or Remorse,  
 Which is best?

JOHN.

Why, Regret.

ALFRED.

No; Remorse, Jack, of course;  
 For the one is related, to be sure, to  
 the other.  
 Regret is a spiteful old maid; but  
 her brother,  
 Remorse, though a widower cer-  
 tainly, yet  
*Has* been wed to young Pleasure.  
 Dear Jack, hang Regret!

JOHN.

*Bref!* you mean, then, to go?

ALFRED.

*Bref!* I do.

JOHN.

One word . . . stay!  
 Are you really in love with Matilda?

ALFRED.

Love, eh?

What a question! Of course.

JOHN.

*Were* you really in love  
 With Madame de Nevers?

ALFRED.

What; Lucile? No, by Jove,  
 Never *really*.

JOHN.

She's pretty?

ALFRED.

Decidedly so.  
 At least, so she was, some ten sum-  
 mers ago.  
 As soft and as sallow as Autumn,—  
 with hair  
 Neither black, nor yet brown, but  
 that tinge which the air

Takes at eve in September, when  
 night lingers lone  
 Through a vineyard, from beams  
 of a slow-setting sun.  
 Eyes — the wistful gazelle's; the  
 fine foot of a fairy;  
 And a hand fit a fay's wand to wave,  
 — white and airy;  
 A voice soft and sweet as a tune  
 that one knows.  
 Something in her there was, set you  
 thinking of those  
 Strange backgrounds of Raphael . . .  
 that hectic and deep  
 Brief twilight in which southern  
 suns fall asleep.

JOHN.

Coquette?

ALFRED.

Not at all. 'Twas her own fault.  
 Not she!  
 I had loved her the better, had she  
 less loved me.  
 The heart of a man's like that deli-  
 cate weed  
 Which requires to be trampled on,  
 boldly indeed,  
 Ere it gives forth the fragrance you  
 wish to extract.  
 'Tis a simile, trust me, if not new,  
 exact.

JOHN.

Women change so.

ALFRED.

Of course.

JOHN.

And, unless rumor errs,  
 I believe that, last year, the Com-  
 tesse de Nevers<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> O Shakespeare! how couldst thou ask  
 "What's in a name?"  
 'Tis the devil's in it when a bard has to  
 frame  
 English rhymes for alliance with names  
 that are French;  
 And in these rhymes of mine, well I know  
 that I trench  
 All too far on that license which critics re-  
 fuse,

Was at Baden the rage,— held an  
 absolute court  
 Of devoted adorers, and really  
 made sport  
 Of her subjects.

ALFRED.

Indeed!

JOHN.

When she broke off with you  
 Her engagement, her heart did not  
 break with it?

ALFRED.

Pooh!

Pray would you have had her dress  
 always in black,  
 And shut herself up in a convent,  
 dear Jack?  
 Besides, 'twas my fault the engage-  
 ment was broken.

JOHN.

Most likely. How was it?

ALFRED.

The tale is soon spoken.  
 She bored me. I showed it. She  
 saw it. What next?  
 She reproached. I retorted. Of  
 course she was vexed.  
 I was vexed that she was so. She  
 sulked. So did I.  
 If I asked her to sing, she looked  
 ready to cry.  
 I was contrite, submissive. She  
 softened. I hardened.  
 At noon I was banished. At eve I  
 was pardoned.

With just right, to accord to a well-brought-  
 up Muse.  
 Yet, though faulty the union, in many a  
 line,  
 'Twixt my British-born verse and my French  
 heroine,  
 Since, however auspiciously wedded they  
 be,  
 There is many a pair yet cannot agree.  
 Your forgiveness for this pair the author  
 invites,  
 Whom necessity, not inclination, unites.

She said I had no heart. I said she had no reason.  
 I swore she talked nonsense. She sobbed I talked treason.  
 In short, my dear fellow, 'twas time, as you see,  
 Things should come to a crisis, and finish. 'Twas she  
 By whom to that crisis the matter was brought.  
 She released me. I lingered. I lingered, she thought,  
 With too sullen an aspect. This gave me, of course,  
 The occasion to fly in a rage, mount my horse,  
 And declare myself uncomprehended. And so  
 We parted. The rest of the story you know.

JOHN.

No, indeed.

ALFRED.

Well, we parted. Of course we could not  
 Continue to meet, as before, in one spot.  
 You conceive it was awkward?  
 Even Don Ferdinando  
 Can do, you remember, no more than he can do.  
 I think that I acted exceedingly well,  
 Considering the time when this rupture befell,  
 For Paris was charming just then. It deranged  
 All my plans for the winter. I asked to be changed, —  
 Wrote for Naples, then vacant, — obtained it, — and so  
 Joined my new post at once: but scarce reached it, when lo!  
 My first news from Paris informs me Lucile  
 Is ill, and in danger. Conceive what I feel.  
 I fly back. I find her recovered, but yet

Looking pale. I am seized with a contrite regret;  
 I ask to renew the engagement.

JOHN.

And she?

ALFRED.

Reflects, but declines. We part, swearing to be  
 Friends ever, friends only. All that sort of thing!  
 We each keep our letters . . . a portrait . . . a ring . . .  
 With a pledge to return them whenever the one  
 Or the other shall call for them back.

JOHN.

Pray go on.

ALFRED.

My story is finished. Of course I enjoin  
 On Lucile all those thousand good maxims we coin  
 To supply the grim deficit found in our days,  
 When Love leaves them bankrupt. I preach. She obeys.  
 She goes out in the world; takes to dancing once more, —  
 A pleasure she rarely indulged in before.  
 I go back to my post, and collect (I must own  
 'Tis a taste I had never before, my dear John)  
 Antiques and small Elzevirs. Heigh-ho! now, Jack,  
 You know all.

JOHN (*after a pause*).

You are really resolved to go back?

ALFRED.

Eh, where?

JOHN.

To that worst of all places, — the past.  
 You remember Lot's wife?

ALFRED.

'Twas a promise when last  
We parted. My honor is pledged to it.

JOHN.

Well,  
What is it you wish me to do?

ALFRED.

You must tell  
Matilda, I meant to have called —  
to leave word —  
To explain — but the time was so  
pressing —

JOHN.

My lord,  
Your lordship's obedient! I really  
can't do. . .

ALFRED.

You wish then to break off my mar-  
riage?

JOHN.

No, no!  
But indeed I can't see why yourself  
you need take  
These letters.

ALFRED.

Not see? would you have me, then,  
break  
A promise my honor is pledged to?

JOHN (*humming*).

"*Off, off,  
And away! said the stranger*" . . .

ALFRED.

O, good! O, you scoff!

JOHN.

At what, my dear Alfred?

ALFRED.

At all things!

JOHN.

Indeed?

ALFRED.

Yes; I see that your heart is as dry  
as a reed:

That the dew of your youth is  
rubbed off you: I see

You have no feeling left in you.  
even for me!

At honor you jest; you are cold as  
a stone

To the warm voice of friendship  
Belief you have none;

You have lost faith in all things.  
You carry a blight

About with you everywhere. Yes,  
at the sight

Of such callous indifference, who  
could be calm?

I must leave you at once, Jack, or  
else the last balm

That is left me in Gilead, you'll turn  
into gall.

Heartless, cold, unconcerned. . .

JOHN.

Have you done? Is that all?  
Well, then, listen to me! I pre-  
sume when you made

Up your mind to propose to Miss  
Darcy, you weighed

All the drawbacks against the  
equivalent gains,

Ere you finally settled the point.  
What remains

But to stick to your choice? You  
want money: 'tis here.

A settled position: 'tis yours. A  
career:

You secure it. A wife, young, and  
pretty as rich,

Whom all men will envy you. Why  
must you itch

To be running away on the eve of  
all this,

To a woman whom never for once  
did you miss

All these years since you left her?  
Who knows what may hap?

This letter — to *me* — is a palpable  
trap.

The woman has changed since you  
knew her. Perchance

She yet seeks to renew her youth's  
broken romance.

When women begin to feel youth  
and their beauty

Slip from them, they count it a sort  
 of a duty  
 To let nothing else slip away unse-  
 cured  
 Which these, while they lasted,  
 might once have procured.  
 Lucile's coquette to the end of her  
 fingers,  
 I will stake my last farthing. Per-  
 haps the wish lingers  
 To recall the once reckless, indiffer-  
 ent lover  
 To the feet he has left; let intrigue  
 now recover  
 What truth could not keep. 'Twere  
 a vengeance, no doubt —  
 A triumph; — but why must *you*  
 bring it about?  
 You are risking the substance of all  
 that you schemed  
 To obtain; and for what? Some  
 mad dream you have dreamed!

ALFRED.

But there's nothing to risk. You  
 exaggerate, Jack.  
 You mistake. In three days, at the  
 most, I am back.

JOHN.

Ay, but how? . . . discontented, un-  
 settled, upset,  
 Bearing with you a comfortless  
 twinge of regret;  
 Preoccupied, sulky, and likely  
 enough  
 To make your betrothed break off  
 all in a huff.  
 Three days, do you say? But in  
 three days who knows  
 What may happen? I don't, nor  
 do you, I suppose.

v.

Of all the good things in this good  
 world around us,  
 The one most abundantly furnished  
 and found us,  
 And which, for that reason, we  
 least care about,  
 And can best spare our friends, is  
 good counsel, no doubt.

But advice, when 'tis sought from  
 a friend (though civility  
 May forbid to avow it), means mere  
 liability  
 In the bill we already have drawn  
 on Remorse,  
 Which we deem that a true friend  
 is bound to indorse.  
 A mere lecture on debt from that  
 friend is a bore.  
 Thus, the better his cousin's advice  
 was the more  
 Alfred Vargrave with angry resent-  
 ment opposed it.  
 And, having the worst of the con-  
 test, he closed it  
 With so firm a resolve his bad  
 ground to maintain,  
 That, sadly perceiving resistance  
 was vain,  
 And argument fruitless, the amiable  
 Jack  
 Came to terms, and assisted his  
 cousin to pack  
 A slender valise (the one small con-  
 descension  
 Which his final remonstrance ob-  
 tained), whose dimension  
 Excluded large outfits; and, cursing  
 his stars, he  
 Shook hand with his friend and  
 returned to Miss Darcy.

vi.

Lord Alfred, when last to the win-  
 dow he turned,  
 Ere he looked up and quitted his  
 chamber, discerned  
 Matilda ride by, with her cheek  
 beaming bright  
 In what Virgil has called "Youth's  
 purpleal light."  
 (I like the expression, and can't  
 find a better).  
 He signed as he looked at her. Did  
 he regret her!  
 In her habit and hat, with her glad  
 golden hair,  
 As airy and blithe as a blithe bird in  
 And her arch rosy lips, and her  
 eager blue eyes,

With their little impertinent look  
 of surprise,  
 And her round youthful figure, and  
 fair neck, below  
 The dark drooping feather, as ra-  
 dianant as snow, —  
 I can only declare, that if *I* had the  
 chance  
 Of passing three days in the exqui-  
 site glance  
 Of those eyes, or caressing the hand  
 that now petted  
 That fine English mare, I should  
 much have regretted  
 Whatever might lose me one little  
 half-hour  
 Of a pastime so pleasant, when once  
 in my power.  
 For, if one drop of milk from the  
 bright Milky-Way  
 Could turn into a woman, 'twould  
 look, I dare say,  
 Not more fresh than Matilda was  
 looking that day.

## VII.

But, whatever the feeling that  
 prompted the sigh  
 With which Alfred Vargrave now  
 watched her ride by,  
 I can only affirm that, in watching  
 her ride,  
 As he turned from the window, he  
 certainly sighed.

## CANTO II.

## I.

Letter from LORD ALFRED VAR-  
 GRAVE to the COMTESSE DE  
 NEVERS.

“BIGORRE, Tuesday.

“Your note, Madam, reached me  
 to-day, at Bigorre,  
 And commands (need I add?) my  
 obedience. Before  
 The night I shall be at Lurchon, —  
 where a line,  
 If sent to Duval's, the hotel where  
 I dine,

Will find me, awaiting your orders.

Receive

My respects,

“Yours sincerely,

“A. VARGRAVE,

“I leave

In an hour.”

## II.

In an hour from the time he wrote  
 this,

Alfred Vargrave, in tracking a  
 mountain abyss,

Gave the rein to his steed and his  
 thoughts, and pursued,

In pursuing his course through the  
 blue solitude,

The reflections that journey gave  
 rise to.

And here

(Because, without some such pre-  
 caution, I fear

You might fail to distinguish them  
 each from the rest

Of the world they belong to; whose  
 captives are drest,

As our convicts, precisely the same  
 one and all,

While the coat cut for Peter is  
 passed on to Paul)

I resolve, one by one, when I pick  
 from the mass

The persons I want, as before you  
 they pass,

To label them broadly in plain black  
 and white

On the backs of them. Therefore  
 whilst yet *tu*'s in sight,

I first label my hero.

## III.

The age is gone o'er

When a man may in all things be all.  
 We have more

Painters, poets, musicians, and art-  
 ists, no doubt,

Than the great Cinquecento gave  
 birth to: but out

Of a million of mere dilettanti,  
 when, *when*

Will a new LEONARDO arise on our  
 ken?

He is gone with the age which be-  
 gat him. Our own  
 Is too vast, and too complex, for  
 one man alone  
 To embody its purpose, and hold it  
 shut close  
 In the palm of his hand. There  
 were giants in those  
 Irreclaimable days; but in these  
 days of ours,  
 In dividing the work, we distribute  
 the powers.  
 Yet a dwarf on a dead giant's shoul-  
 ders sees more  
 Than the 'live giant's eyesight  
 availed to explore;  
 And in life's lengthened alphabet  
 what used to be  
 To our sires X Y Z is to us A B C.  
 A Vanini is roasted alive for his  
 pains,  
 But a Bacon comes after and picks  
 up his brains.  
 A Bruno is angrily seized by the  
 throttle  
 And hunted about by thy ghost,  
 Aristotle,  
 Till a More or Lavater step into his  
 place;  
 Then the world turns and makes an  
 admiring grimace.  
 Once the men were so great and so  
 few, they appear,  
 Through a distant Olympian atmos-  
 phere,  
 Like vast Caryatids upholding the  
 age.  
 Now the men are so many and small,  
 disengage  
 One man from the million to mark  
 him, next moment  
 The crowd sweeps him hurriedly  
 out of your comment;  
 And since we seek vainly (to praise  
 in our songs)  
 'Mid our fellows the size which to  
 heroes belongs,  
 We take the whole age for a hero,  
 in want  
 Of a better: and still, in its favor,  
 descant

On the strength and the beauty  
 which, failing to find  
 In any one man, we ascribe to man-  
 kind.

## IV.

Alfred Vargrave was one of those  
 men who achieve  
 So little, because of the much they  
 conceive.  
 With irresolute finger he knocked  
 at each one  
 Of the doorways of life, and abided  
 in none,  
 His course, by each star that would  
 cross it, was set, [regret.  
 And whatever he did he was sure to  
 That target, discussed by the trav-  
 ellers of old,  
 Which to one appeared 'argent, to  
 one appeared gold,  
 To him, ever lingering on Doubt's  
 dizzy margent,  
 Appeared in one moment both  
 golden and argent.  
 The man who seeks one thing in  
 life, and but one, [done:  
 May hope to achieve it before life be  
 But he who seeks all things, wher-  
 ever he goes,  
 Only reaps from the hopes which  
 around him he sows  
 A harvest of barren regrets. And  
 the worm  
 That crawls on in the dust to the  
 definite term  
 Of its creeping existence, and sees  
 nothing more  
 Than the path it pursues till its  
 creeping be o'er  
 In its limited vision, is happier far  
 Than the Half-Sage, whose course,  
 fixed by no friendly star,  
 Is by each star distracted in turn,  
 and who knows  
 Each will still be as distant wherever  
 he goes.

## V.

Both brilliant and brittle, both bold  
 and unstable,  
 Indecisive yet keen, Alfred Var-  
 grave seemed able



To dazzle, but not to illumine man-kind.

A vigorous, various, versatile mind;  
A character wavering, fitful, uncertain,

As the shadow that shakes o'er a luminous curtain,

Vague, flitting, but on it forever impressing

The shape of some substance at which you stand guessing:

When you said, "All is worthless and weak here," behold!

Into sight on a sudden there seemed to unfold [the man:

Great outlines of strenuous truth in

When you said, "This is genius," the outlines grew wan.

And his life, though in all things so gifted and skilled,

Was, at best, but a promise which nothing fulfilled.

## VI.

In the budding of youth, ere wild winds can deflower

The shut leaves of man's life, round the germ of his power

Yet folded, his life had been earnest. Alas!

In that life one occasion, one moment, there was

When this earnestness might, with the life-sap of youth,

Lusty fruitage have borne in his manhood's full growth;

But it found him too soon, when his nature was still

The delicate toy of too pliant a will,

The boisterous wind of the world to resist, [wisdom.

Or the frost of the world's wintry He missed

That occasion, too rathe in its advent.

Since then,

He had made it a law, in his commerce with men,

That intensity in him, which only left sore [ignore.

The heart it disturbed, to repel and

And thus, as some Prince by his subjects deposed,

Whose strength he, by seeking to crush it, disclosed,

In resigning the power he lacked power to support,

Turns his back upon courts, with a sneer at the court,

In his converse this man for self-comfort appealed

To a cynic denial of all he concealed  
In the instincts and feelings belied by his words.

Words, however, are things; and the man who accords

To his language the license to outrage his soul

Is controlled by the words he disdains to control.

And, therefore, he seemed in the deeds of each day,

The light code proclaimed on his lips to obey;

And, the slave of each whim, followed wilfully aught

That perchance fooled the fancy, or flattered the thought.

Yet, indeed, deep within him, the spirits of truth,

Vast, vague aspirations, the powers of his youth,

Lived and breathed, and made moan — stirred themselves — strove

to start [Hades, his heart,

Into deeds — though deposed, in that Like those antique Theogonies ruined and hurled

Under clefts of the hills, which, convulsing the world,

Heaved, in earthquake, their heads the rent caverns above,

To trouble at times in the light court of Jove [fined awe

All its frivolous gods, with an unde-Of wronged rebel powers that owned

not their law.

For his sake, I am fain to believe that, if born

To some lowlier rank (from the world's languid scorn

Secured by the world's stern resist-  
 ance), where strife,  
 Strife and toil, and not pleasure,  
 gave purpose to life,  
 He possibly might have contrived to  
 attain  
 Not eminence only, but worth. So,  
 again,  
 Had he been of his own house the  
 first-born, each gift  
 Of a mind many-gifted had gone to  
 uplift  
 A great name by a name's greatest  
 uses.

But there  
 He stood isolated, opposed, as it  
 were,  
 To life's great realities; part of no  
 plan:  
 And if ever a nobler and happier  
 man  
 He might hope to become, that alone  
 could be when  
 With all that is real in life and in  
 men  
 What was real in him should have  
 been reconciled;  
 When each influence now from ex-  
 perience exiled  
 Should have seized on his being,  
 combined with his nature,  
 And formed, as by fusion, a new hu-  
 man creature:  
 As when those airy elements view-  
 less to sight  
 (The amalgam of which, if our sci-  
 ence be right,  
 The germ of this populous planet  
 doth fold)  
 Unite in the glass of the chemist, be-  
 hold!  
 Where a void seemed before there a  
 substance appears,  
 From the fusion of forces whence  
 issued the spheres!

## VII.

But the permanent cause why his  
 life failed and missed  
 The full value of life was,— where  
 man should resist

The world, which man's genius is  
 called to command,  
 He gave way, less from lack of the  
 power to withstand,  
 Than from lack of the resolute will  
 to retain  
 Those strongholds of life which the  
 world strives to gain.  
 Let this character go in the old-  
 fashioned way,  
 With the moral thereof tightly tacked  
 to it. Say —  
 "Let any man once show the world  
 that he feels  
 Afraid of its bark, and 'twill fly at  
 his heels:  
 Let him fearlessly face it, 'twill leave  
 him alone:  
 But 'twill fawn at his feet if he  
 flings it a bone."

## VIII.

The moon of September, now half  
 at the full,  
 Was unfolding from darkness and  
 dreamland the lull  
 Of the quiet blue air, where the  
 many-faced hills  
 Watched, well-pleased, their fair  
 slaves, the light, foam-footed  
 rills,  
 Dance and sing down the steep mar-  
 ble stairs of their courts,  
 And gracefully fashion a thousand  
 sweet sports.  
 Lord Alfred (by this on his journey-  
 ing far)  
 Was pensively puffing his Lopez  
 cigar,  
 And brokenly humming an old opera  
 strain,  
 And thinking, perchance, of those  
 castles in Spain  
 Which that long rocky barrier hid  
 from his sight;  
 When suddenly, out of the neighbor-  
 ing night,  
 A horseman emerged from a fold of  
 the hill,  
 And so startled his steed, that was  
 winding at will

Up the thin dizzy strip of a pathway  
 which led  
 O'er the mountain — the reins on its  
 neck, and its head  
 Hanging lazily forward — that, but  
 for a hand  
 Light and ready, yet firm, in familiar  
 command,  
 Both rider and horse might have  
 been in a trice  
 Hurled horribly over the grim precipice.

## IX.

As soon as the moment's alarm had  
 subsided,  
 And the oath, with which nothing  
 can find unprovided  
 A thoroughbred Englishman, safely  
 exploded,  
 Lord Alfred unbent (as Apollo his  
 bow did  
 Now and then) his erectness; and  
 looking, not ruder  
 Than such inroad would warrant,  
 surveyed the intruder,  
 Whose arrival so nearly cut short in  
 his glory  
 My hero, and finished abruptly this  
 story.

## X.

The stranger, a man of his own age  
 or less,  
 Well mounted, and simple though  
 rich in his dress,  
 Wore his beard and mustache in the  
 fashion of France.  
 His face, which was pale, gathered  
 force from the glance  
 Of a pair of dark, vivid, and eloquent  
 eyes.  
 With a gest of apology, touched with  
 surprise,  
 He lifted his hat, bowed and courteously  
 made  
 Some excuse in such well-cadenced  
 French as betrayed,  
 At the first word he spoke, the Parisian.

## XI.

I swear  
 I have wandered about in the world  
 everywhere;  
 From many strange mouths have  
 heard many strange tongues;  
 Strained with many strange idioms  
 my lips and my lungs;  
 Walked in many a far land, regretting  
 my own;  
 In many a language groaned many  
 a groan;  
 And have often had reason to curse  
 those wild fellows  
 Who built the high house at which  
 Heaven turned jealous,  
 Making human audacity stumble and  
 stammer  
 When seized by the throat in the  
 hard gripe of Grammar.  
 But the language of languages dearest  
 to me  
 Is that in which once, *O ma toute  
 chérie,*  
 When, together, we bent o'er your  
 nosegay for hours,  
 You explained what was silently  
 said by the flowers,  
 And, selecting the sweetest of all,  
 sent a flame  
 Through my heart, as, in laughing,  
 you murmured, *Je t'aime.*

## XII.

The Italians have voices like peacocks;  
 the Spanish  
 Smell, I fancy, of garlic; the Swedish  
 and Danish  
 Have something too Runic, too  
 rough and unshod, in  
 Their accent for mouths not descended  
 from Odin;  
 German gives me a cold in the head,  
 sets me wheezing  
 And coughing; and Russian is nothing  
 but sneezing;  
 But by Belus and Babel! I never  
 have heard,  
 And I never shall hear (I well know  
 it), one word

Of that delicate idiom of Paris  
without  
Feeling morally sure, beyond ques-  
tion or doubt,  
By the wild way in which my heart  
inwardly fluttered  
That my heart's native tongue to  
my heart had been uttered.  
And when'er I hear French spoken  
as I approve,  
I feel myself quietly falling in love.

## XIII.

Lord Alfred, on hearing the stran-  
ger, appeased  
By a something, an accent, a ca-  
dence, which pleased  
His ear with that pledge of good  
breeding which tells  
At once of the world in whose fel-  
lowship dwells  
The speaker that owns it, was glad  
to remark  
In the horseman a man one might  
meet after dark  
Without fear.  
And thus, not disagreeably im-  
pressed,  
As it seemed, with each other, the  
two men abreast  
Rode on slowly a moment.

## XIV.

STRANGER.

I see, Sir, you are  
A smoker. Allow me!

ALFRED.

Pray take a cigar.

STRANGER.

Many thanks! . . . Such cigars are  
a luxury here.  
Do you go to Luchon?

ALFRED.

Yes; and you?

STRANGER.

Yes. I fear,  
Since our road is the same, that our  
journey must be

Somewhat closer than is our ac-  
quaintance. You see  
How narrow the path is. I'm  
tempted to ask  
Your permission to finish (no diffi-  
cult task!)  
The cigar you have given me (really  
a prize!)  
In your company.

ALFRED.

Charmed, Sir, to find your road lies  
In the way of my own inclinations!  
Indeed  
The dream of your nation I find in  
this weed,  
In the distant savannas a talisman  
grows  
That makes all men brothers that  
use it . . . who knows?  
That blaze which erewhile from the  
*Boulevard* outbroke,  
It has ended where wisdom begins,  
Sir, — in smoke.  
Messieurs Lopez (whatever your  
publicists write)  
Have done more in their way human  
kind to unite,  
Perchance, than ten Proudhons.

STRANGER.

Yes. Ah, what a scene!

ALFRED.

Humph! Nature is here too pre-  
tentious. Her mien  
Is too haughty. One likes to be  
coaxed, not compelled,  
To the notice such beauty resents  
if withheld.  
She seems to be saying too plainly,  
"Admire me!"  
And I answer, "Yes, madam, I do:  
but you tire me."

STRANGER.

That sunset, just now though . . .

ALFRED.

A very old trick!  
One would think that the sun by this  
time must be sick

Of blushing at what, by this time,  
he must know  
Too well to be shocked by—this  
world.

STRANGER.

Ah, 'tis so  
With us all. 'Tis the sinner that  
best knew the world  
At twenty, whose lip is, at sixty,  
most curled  
With disdain of its follies. You  
stay at Luchon?

ALFRED.

A day or two only.

STRANGER.

The season is done.

ALFRED.

Already?

STRANGER.

'Twas shorter this year than the  
last.

Folly soon wears her shoes out.  
She dances so fast,  
We are all of us tired.

ALFRED.

You know the place well?

STRANGER.

I have been there two seasons.

ALFRED.

Pray who is the Belle  
Of the Baths at this moment?

STRANGER.

The same who has been  
The belle of all places in which she  
is seen;  
The belle of all Paris last winter;  
last spring  
The belle of all Baden.

ALFRED.

An uncommon thing!

STRANGER.

Sir, an uncommon beauty! . . . I  
rather should say,  
An uncommon character. Truly,

each day

One meets women whose beauty is  
equal to hers,  
But none with the charm of Lucile  
de Nevers.

ALFRED.

Madame de Nevers?

STRANGER.

Do you know her?

ALFRED.

I know,

Or, rather, I knew her—a long time  
ago.

I almost forget . . .

STRANGER.

What a wit! what a grace  
In her language! her movements!  
what play in her face!  
And yet what a sadness she seems  
to conceal!

ALFRED.

You speak like a lover.

STRANGER.

I speak as I feel,  
But not like a lover. What interests  
me so

In Lucile, at the same time forbids  
me, I know,

To give to that interest, whate'er  
the sensation,

The name we men give to an hour's  
admiration,

A night's passing passion, an ac-  
tress's eyes,

A dancing girl's ankles, a fine lady's  
sighs.

ALFRED.

Yes, I quite comprehend. But this  
sadness—this shade

Which you speak of? . . . it almost  
would make me afraid

Your gay countrymen, sir, less  
adroit must have grown,

Since when, as a stripling, at Paris.  
I own

I found in them terrible rivals, — if  
 yet  
 They have all lacked the skill to  
 console this regret  
 (If regret be the word I should use),  
 or fulfil  
 This desire (if desire be the word),  
 which seems still  
 To endure unappeased. For I take  
 it for granted,  
 From all that you say, that the will  
 was not wanted.

xv.

'The stranger replied, not without  
 irritation:  
 "I have heard that an Englishman  
 — one of your nation,  
 I presume — and if so, I must beg  
 you, indeed,  
 To excuse the contempt which I . . ."

ALFRED.

Pray, Sir, proceed  
 With your tale. My compatriot,  
 what was his crime?

STRANGER.

O, nothing! His folly was not so  
 sublime  
 As to merit that term. If I blamed  
 him just now,  
 It was not for the sin, but the silli-  
 ness.

ALFRED.

How?

STRANGER.

I own I hate Botany. Still, . . . I  
 admit,  
 Although I myself have no passion  
 for it,  
 And do not understand, yet I can-  
 not despise  
 'The cold man of science, who walks  
 with his eyes  
 All alert through a garden of  
 flowers, and strips  
 The lilies' gold tongues, and the  
 roses' red lips,  
 With a ruthless dissection; since  
 he, I suppose,

Has some purpose beyond the mere  
 mischief he does.  
 But the stupid and mischievous boy,  
 that uproots  
 The exotics, and tramples the ten-  
 der young shoots,  
 For a boy's brutal pastime, and only  
 because  
 He knows no distinction 'twixt  
 heartsease and haws, —  
 One would wish, for the sake of  
 each nursling so nipped,  
 To catch the young rascal and have  
 him well whipped!

ALFRED.

Some compatriot of mine, do I then  
 understand,  
 With a cold Northern heart, and a  
 rude English hand,  
 Has injured your Rosebud of France?

STRANGER.

Sir, I know  
 But little, or nothing. Yet some  
 faces show  
 The last act of a tragedy in their  
 regard:  
 Though the first scenes be wanting,  
 it yet is not hard  
 To divine, more or less, what the  
 plot may have been.  
 And what sort of actors have passed  
 o'er the scene,  
 And whenever I gaze on the face of  
 Lucile,  
 With its pensive and passionless  
 languor, I feel  
 That some feeling hath burnt  
 there . . . burnt out, and  
 burnt up  
 Health and hope. So you feel when  
 you gaze down the cup  
 Of extinguished volcanoes: you  
 judge of the fire  
 Once there, by the ravage you see;  
 — the desire,  
 By the apathy left in its wake, and  
 that sense  
 Of a moral, immovable, mute impo-  
 tence.

ALFRED.

Humph! . . . I see you have finished, at last, your cigar.  
Can I offer another?

STRANGER.

No, thank you. We are  
Not two miles from Luchon.

ALFRED.

You know the road well?

STRANGER.

I have often been over it.

XVI.

Here a pause fell  
On their converse. Still musingly  
on, side by side,  
In the moonlight, the two men continued to ride  
Down the dim mountain pathway.  
But each, for the rest  
Of their journey, although they still  
rode on abreast,  
Continued to follow in silence the  
train [ed his brain;  
Of the different feelings that haunt-  
And each, as though roused from a  
deep reverie,  
Almost shouted, descending the  
mountain, to see  
Burst at once on the moonlight the  
silvery Baths,  
The long lime-tree alley, the dark  
gleaming paths,  
With the lamps twinkling through  
them—the quaint wooden  
roofs—  
The little white houses.

The clatter of hoofs,

And the music of wandering bands,  
up the walls

Of the steep hanging hill, at remote  
intervals

Reached them, crossed by the sound  
of the clacking of whips,

And here and there, faintly, through  
serpentine slips

Of verdant rose-gardens, deep-shel-  
tered with screens

Of airy acacias and dark evergreens,

They could mark the white dresses,  
and catch the light songs,  
Of the lovely Parisians that wan-  
dered in throngs,  
Led by Laughter and Love through  
the cold eventide  
Down the dream-haunted valley, or  
up the hillside.

XVII.

At length, at the door of the inn  
PHERISSON,  
(Pray go there, if ever you go to  
Luchon!)

The two horsemen, well pleased to  
have reached it, alighted  
And exchanged their last greetings.

The Frenchman invited  
Lord Alfred to dinner. Lord Alfred  
declined.

He had letters to write, and felt  
tired. So he dined  
In his own rooms that night.

With an unquiet eye  
He watched his companion depart;  
nor knew why,  
Beyond all accountable reason or  
measure,

He felt in his breast such a sovran  
displeasure.

“The fellow’s good-looking,” he  
murmured at last,

“And yet not a coxcomb.” Some  
ghost of the past

Vexed him still.

“If he love her,” he thought,  
“let him win her.”

Then he turned to the future—and  
ordered his dinner.

XVIII.

O hour of all hours, the most blessed  
upon earth,

Blesséd hour of our dinners!

The land of his birth;  
The face of his first love; the bills  
that he owes;

The twaddle of friends and the  
venom of foes;

The sermon he heard when to church  
he last went;

The money he borrowed, the money  
 he spent, —  
 All of these things a man, I believe,  
 may forget,  
 And not be the worse for forget-  
 ting; but yet  
 Never, never, O never! earth's luck-  
 iest sinner  
 Hath unpunished forgotten the hour  
 of his dinner!  
 Indigestion, that conscience of  
 every bad stomach,  
 Shall relentlessly gnaw and pursue  
 him with some ache  
 Or some pain; and trouble, remorse-  
 less, his best ease,  
 As the Furies once troubled the sleep  
 of Orestes.

## XIX.

We may live without poetry, music,  
 and art;  
 We may live without conscience,  
 and live without heart;  
 We may live without friends; we  
 may live without books;  
 But civilized man cannot live with-  
 out cooks.  
 He may live without books, — what  
 is knowledge but grieving?  
 He may live without hope, — what  
 is hope but deceiving?  
 He may live without love, — what  
 is passion but pining?  
 But where is the man that can live  
 without dining?

## XX.

Lord Alfred found, waiting his  
 coming, a note  
 From Lucile.

“Your last letter has reached me,”  
 she wrote. [the ball,  
 “This evening, alas! I must go to  
 And shall not be at home till too  
 late for your call;  
 But to-morrow, at any rate, *sans*  
*faute*, at One  
 You will find me at home, and will  
 find me alone.  
 Meanwhile, let me thank you sin-  
 cerely, milord,

For the honor with which you ad-  
 here to your word.  
 Yes, I thank you, Lord Alfred! To-  
 morrow, then.

“L.”

## XXI.

I find myself terribly puzzled to tell  
 The feeling with which Alfred Var-  
 grave flung down  
 This note, as he poured out his wine.  
 I must own  
 That I think he himself could have  
 hardly explained  
 Those feelings exactly.

“Yes, yes,” as he drained  
 The glass down, he muttered,  
 “Jack’s right, after all.

The coquette!”

“Does milord mean to go to the  
 ball?”

Asked the waiter, who lingered.

“Perhaps. I don’t know.  
 You may keep me a ticket, in case I  
 should go.”

## XXII.

O, better, no doubt, is a dinner of  
 herbs,  
 When seasoned by love, which no  
 rancor disturbs,  
 And sweetened by all that is sweet-  
 est in life,  
 Than turbot, bisque, ortolans, eaten  
 in strife!

But if, out of humor, and hungry,  
 alone,

A man should sit down to a dinner,  
 each one

Of the dishes of which the cook  
 chooses to spoil

With a horrible mixture of garlic  
 and oil,

The chances are ten against one, I  
 must own,

He gets up as ill-tempered as when  
 he sat down.

And if any reader this fact to dis-  
 pute is

Disposed, I say . . . “*Alium edat*  
*cicutis*

*Nocentius!*”



Over the fruit and the wine  
Undisturbed the wasp settled. The  
evening was fine.

Lord Alfred his chair by the window  
had set, [cigarette.  
And languidly lighted his small  
The window was open. The warm  
air without  
Waved the flame of the candles.  
The moths were about.  
In the gloom he sat gloomy.

## XXIII.

Gay sounds from below  
Floated up like faint echoes of joys  
long ago,  
And night deepened apace; through  
the dark avenues  
The lamps twinkled bright; and by  
threes, and by twos, [at will,  
The idlers of Luchon were strolling  
As Lord Alfred could see from the  
cool window-sill,  
Where his gaze, as he languidly  
turned it, fell o'er  
His late travelling companion, now  
passing before  
The inn, at the window of which  
he still sat,  
In full toilet, — boots varnished,  
and snowy cravat,  
Gayly smoothing and buttoning a  
yellow kid glove,  
As he turned down the avenue.

Watching above,  
From his window, the stranger,  
who stopped as he walked  
To mix with those groups, and now  
nodded, now talked,  
To the young Paris dandies, Lord  
Alfred discerned,  
By the way hats were lifted, and  
glances were turned,  
That this unknown acquaintance,  
now bound for the ball,  
Was a person of rank or of fashion;  
for all  
Whom he bowed to in passing, or  
stopped with and chattered,  
Walked on with a look which im-  
plied . . . "I feel flattered!"

## XXIV.

His form was soon lost in the dis-  
tance and gloom.

## XXV.

Lord Alfred still sat by himself in  
his room.  
He had finished, one after the other,  
a dozen  
Or more cigarettes. He had thought  
of his cousin:  
He had thought of Matilda, and  
thought of Lucile:  
He had thought about many things:  
thought a great deal  
Of himself: of his past life, his fu-  
ture, his present:  
He had thought of the moon, neither  
full moon nor crescent:  
Of the gay world, so sad! life, so  
sweet and so sour!  
He had thought, too, of glory, and  
fortune, and power:  
Thought of love, and the country,  
and sympathy, and  
A poet's asylum in some distant  
land:  
Thought of man in the abstract, and  
woman, no doubt,  
In particular; also he had thought  
much about  
His digestion, his debts, and his  
dinner; and last,  
He thought that the night would be  
stupidly passed,  
If he thought any more of such  
matters at all:  
So he rose, and resolved to set out  
for the ball.

## XXVI.

I believe, ere he finished his tardy  
toilet,  
That Lord Alfred had spoiled, and  
flung by in a pet,  
Half a dozen white neckcloths, and  
looked for the nonce  
Twenty times in the glass, if he  
looked in it once.

I believe that he split up, in drawing them on,  
 Three pair of pale lavender gloves, one by one.  
 And this is the reason, no doubt, that at last,  
 When he reached the Casino, although he walked fast,  
 He heard, as he hurriedly entered the door,  
 The church-clock strike Twelve.

## XXVII.

The last waltz was just o'er.  
 The chaperons and dancers were all in a flutter.  
 A crowd blocked the door: and a buzz and a mutter  
 Went about in the room as a young man, whose face  
 Lord Alfred had seen ere he entered that place,  
 But a few hours ago, through the perfumed and warm  
 Flowery porch, with a lady that leaned on his arm [days,  
 Like a queen in a fable of old fairy  
 Left the ballroom.

## XXVIII.

The hubbub of comment and praise  
 Reached Lord Alfred as just then he entered.

“*Ma foi!*”

Said a Frenchman beside him, . . . .  
 “That lucky Luvois  
 Has obtained all the gifts of the gods . . . rank and wealth,  
 And good looks, and then such inexhaustible health!  
 He that hath shall have more; and this truth, I surmise,  
 Is the cause why, to-night, by the beautiful eyes  
 Of *la charmante Lucile* more distinguished than all,  
 He so gayly goes off with the belle of the ball.”  
 “Is it true,” asked a lady, aggressively fat,

Who, fierce as a female Leviathan, sat  
 By another that looked like a needle, all steel  
 And tenuity, — “Luvois will marry Lucile?”  
 The needle seemed jerked by a virulent twitch,  
 As though it were bent upon driving a stitch  
 Through somebody's character.

“Madam,” replied,

Interposing, a young man who sat by their side,  
 And was languidly fanning his face with his hat,  
 “I am ready to bet my new Tilbury that,  
 If Luvois has proposed, the Comtesse has refused.”  
 The fat and thin ladies were highly amused.

“Refused! . . . what! a young Duke, not thirty, my dear,  
 With at least half a million (what is it?) a year!”

“That may be,” said the third; “yet I know some time since  
 Castlemar was refused, though as rich, and a Prince.

But Luvois, who was never before in his life  
 In love with a woman who was not a wife,  
 Is now certainly serious.”

## XXIX.

The music once more  
 Recommenced.

## XXX.

Said Lord Alfred, “This ball is a bore!”  
 And returned to the inn, somewhat worse than before.

## XXXI.

There, whilst musing he leaned the dark valley above,  
 Through the warm land were wandering the spirits of love.

A soft breeze in the white window  
 drapery stirred;  
 In the blossomed acacia the lone  
 cricket chirred:  
 The scent of the roses fell faint o'er  
 the night,  
 And the moon on the mountain was  
 dreaming in light.  
 Repose, and yet rapture! that pen-  
 sive wild nature  
 Impregnate with passion in each  
 breathing feature!  
 A stone's-throw from thence,  
 through the large lime-trees  
 peeped, [steeped  
 In a garden of roses, a white châlet,  
 In the moonbeams. The windows  
 oped down to the lawn;  
 The casements were open; the cur-  
 tains were drawn;  
 Lights streamed from the inside;  
 and with them the sound  
 Of music and song. In the garden,  
 around [there set,  
 A table with fruits, wine, tea, ices,  
 Half a dozen young men and young  
 women were met.  
 Light, laughter, and voices, and  
 music, all streamed  
 Through the quiet-leaved limes. At  
 the window there seemed  
 For one moment the outline, familiar  
 and fair,  
 Of a white dress, a white neck, and  
 soft dusky hair,  
 Which Lord Alfred remembered  
 . . . a moment or so  
 It hovered, then passed into shadow;  
 and slow [upflung,  
 The soft notes, from a tender piano  
 Floated forth, and a voice unfor-  
 gotten thus sung:  
 "Hear a song that was born in the  
 land of my birth!  
 The anchors are lifted, the fair  
 ship is free,  
 And the shout of the mariners floats  
 in its mirth  
 'Twixt the light in the sky and  
 the light on the sea.

"And this ship is a world. She is  
 freighted with souls,  
 She is freighted with merchan-  
 dise: proudly she sails  
 With the Labor that stores, and  
 the Will that controls  
 The gold in the ingots, the silk  
 in the bales.

"From the gardens of Pleasure,  
 where reddens the rose,  
 And the scent of the cedar is  
 faint on the air,  
 Past the harbors of Traffic, sub-  
 limely she goes,  
 Man's hopes o'er the world of  
 the waters to bear!

"Where the cheer from the harbors  
 of Traffic is heard,  
 Where the gardens of Pleasure  
 fade fast on the sight,  
 O'er the rose, o'er the cedar, there  
 passes a bird;  
 'Tis the Paradise Bird, never  
 known to alight.

"And that bird, bright and bold as  
 a Poet's desire,  
 Roams her own native heavens,  
 the realms of her birth.  
 There she soars like a seraph, she  
 shines like a fire,  
 And her plumage hath never  
 been sullied by earth.

"And the mariners greet her; there's  
 song on each lip,  
 For that bird of good omen, and  
 joy in each eye.  
 And the ship and the bird, and the  
 bird and the ship,  
 Together go forth over ocean  
 and sky.

"Fast, fast fades the land! far the  
 rose-gardens flee,  
 And far fleet the harbors. In  
 regions unknown  
 The ship is alone on a desert of  
 sea,  
 And the bird in a desert of sky  
 is alone.

“ In those regions unknown, o’er  
 that desert of air,  
 Down that desert of waters —  
 tremendous in wrath —  
 The storm-wind Euroclydon leaps  
 from his lair,  
 And cleaves, through the waves  
 of the ocean, his path.

“ And the bird in the cloud, and the  
 ship on the wave,  
 Overtaken, are beaten about by  
 wild gales :  
 And the mariners all rush their  
 cargo to save,  
 Of the gold in the ingots, the  
 silk in the bales.

“ Lo ! a wonder, which never before  
 hath been heard,  
 For it never before hath been  
 given to sight ;  
 On the ship hath descended the  
 Paradise Bird,  
 The Paradise Bird, never known  
 to alight !

“ The bird which the mariners  
 blessed, when each lip  
 Had a song for the omen that  
 gladdened each eye ;  
 The bright bird for shelter hath  
 flown to the ship  
 From the wrath on the sea and  
 the wrath in the sky.

“ But the mariners heed not the bird  
 any more.  
 They are felling the masts, —  
 they are cutting the sails ;  
 Some are working, some weeping,  
 and some wrangling o’er  
 Their gold in the ingots, their  
 silk in the bales.

“ Souls of men are on board ; wealth  
 of man in the hold ;  
 And the storm-wind Euroclydon  
 sweeps to his prey ;  
 And who heeds the bird ? ‘ Save  
 the silk and the gold ! ’  
 And the bird from her shelter  
 the gust sweeps away !

“ Poor Paradise Bird ! on her lone  
 flight once more  
 Back again in the wake of the  
 wind she is driven, —  
 To be ’whelmed in the storm, or  
 above it to soar,  
 And, if rescued from ocean, to  
 vanish in heaven !

“ And the ship rides the waters. and  
 weathers the gales :  
 From the haven she hears the  
 rejoicing is heard.  
 All hands are at work on the in-  
 gotts, the bales,  
 Save a child, sitting lonely, who  
 misses — the Bird ! ”

— ● —

CANTO III.

I.

With stout iron shoes be my Pega-  
 sus shod !  
 For my road is a rough one : flint,  
 stubble, and clod,  
 Blue clay, and black quagmire,  
 brambles no few,  
 And I gallop up-hill, now.  
 There’s terror that’s true  
 In that tale of a youth who, one  
 night at a revel,  
 Amidst music and mirth lured and  
 wiled by some devil,  
 Followed ever one mask through  
 the mad masquerade,  
 Till, pursued to some chamber de-  
 serted (’tis said),  
 He unmasked, with a kiss, the  
 strange lady, and stood  
 Face to face with a Thing not of  
 flesh nor of blood.  
 In this Masque of the Passions,  
 called Life, there’s no human  
 Emotion, though masked, or in man  
 or in woman,  
 But, when faced and unmasked, it  
 will leave us at last  
 Struck by some supernatural aspect  
 aghast.

For truth is appalling and eldrich,  
 as seen  
 By this world's artificial lamp-  
 lights, and we screen  
 From our sight the strange vision  
 that troubles our life.  
 Alas! why is Genius forever at  
 strife  
 With the world, which, despite the  
 world's self, it ennobles?  
 Why is it that Genius perplexes and  
 troubles [to renew?  
 And offends the effete life it comes  
 'Tis the terror of truth! 'tis that  
 Genius is true!

## II.

Lucile de Nevers (if her riddle I  
 read)  
 Was a woman of genius: whose  
 genius, indeed,  
 With her life was at war. Once,  
 but once, in that life  
 The chance had been hers to escape  
 from this strife  
 In herself; finding peace in the life  
 of another  
 From the passionate wants she, in  
 hers, failed to smother.  
 But the chance fell too soon. when  
 the crude restless power  
 Which had been to her nature so  
 fatal a dower,  
 Only wearied the man it yet haunted  
 and thrall'd;  
 And that moment, once lost, had  
 been never recalled.  
 Yet it left her heart sore: and, to  
 shelter her heart  
 From approach, she then sought, in  
 that delicate art  
 Of concealment, those thousand  
 adroit strategies  
 Of feminine wit, which repel while  
 they please,  
 A weapon, at once, and a shield, to  
 conceal  
 And defend all that women can  
 earnestly feel.  
 Thus, striving her instincts to hide  
 and repress,

She felt frightened, at times, by her  
 very success:  
 She pined for the hill-tops, the  
 clouds, and the stars:  
 Golden wires may annoy us as much  
 as steel bars  
 If they keep us behind prison-win-  
 dows: impassioned  
 Her heart rose and burst the light  
 cage she had fashioned  
 Out of glittering trifles around it.  
 Unknown  
 To herself, all her instincts, without  
 hesitation, [tion.  
 Embraced the idea of self-immola-  
 The strong spirit in her, had her  
 life been but blended  
 With some man's whose heart had  
 her own comprehended,  
 All its wealth at his feet would  
 have lavishly thrown.  
 For him she had struggled and  
 striven alone; [transfused  
 For him had aspired; in him had  
 All the gladness and grace of her  
 nature: and used  
 For him only the spells of its deli-  
 cate power:  
 Like the ministering fairy that  
 brings from her bower  
 To some mage all the treasures,  
 whose use the fond elf,  
 More enriched by her love, disre-  
 gards for herself.  
 But, standing apart, as she ever  
 had done,  
 And her genius, which needed a  
 vent, finding none  
 In the broad fields of action thrown  
 wide to man's power,  
 She unconsciously made it her bul-  
 wark and tower,  
 And built in it her refuge, whence  
 lightly she hurled  
 Her contempt at the fashions and  
 forms of the world.  
 And the permanent cause why she  
 now missed and failed  
 That firm hold upon life she so  
 keenly assailed,

Was, in all those diurnal occasions  
 that place  
 Say—the world and the woman  
 opposed face to face,  
 Where the woman must yield, she,  
 refusing to stir,  
 Offended the world, which in turn  
 wounded her.  
 As before, in the old-fashioned  
 manner, I fit [to wit,  
 To this character, also, its moral:  
 Say—the world is a nettle; dis-  
 turb it, it stings:  
 Grasp it firmly, it stings not. On  
 one of two things,  
 If you would not be stung, it be-  
 hooves you to settle:  
 Avoid it or crush it. She crushed  
 not the nettle;  
 For she could not; nor would she  
 avoid it: she tried  
 With the weak hand of woman to  
 thrust it aside,  
 And it stung her. A woman is too  
 slight a thing  
 To trample the world without feel-  
 ing its sting.

## III.

One lodges but simply at Luchon;  
 yet, thanks  
 To the season that changes forever  
 the banks  
 Of the blossoming mountains, and  
 shifts the light cloud  
 O'er the valley, and hushes or  
 rouses the loud  
 Wind that wails in the pines, or  
 creeps murmuring down  
 The dark evergreen slopes to the  
 slumbering town,  
 And the torrent that falls, faintly  
 heard from afar,  
 And the bluebells that purple the  
 dapple-gray scaur,  
 One sees with each month of the  
 many-faced year  
 A thousand sweet changes of beauty  
 appear.  
 The *châlet* where dwelt the Com-  
 tesse de Nevers

Rested half up the base of a moun-  
 tain of firs, [the road,  
 In a garden of roses, revealed to  
 Yet withdrawn from its noise: 'twas  
 a peaceful abode.  
 And the walls, and the roofs, with  
 their gables like hoods  
 Which the monks wear, were built  
 of sweet resinous woods.  
 The sunlight of noon, as Lord Al-  
 fred ascended  
 The steep garden paths, every odor  
 had blended  
 Of the ardent carnations, and faint  
 heliotropes,  
 With the balms floated down from  
 the dark wooded slopes:  
 A light breeze at the windows was  
 playing about,  
 And the white curtains floated, now  
 in and now out.  
 The house was all hushed when he  
 rang at the door,  
 Which was opened to him in a mo-  
 ment, or more,  
 By an old nodding negress, whose  
 sable head shined  
 In the sun like a cocoa-nut polished  
 in Ind,  
 'Neath the snowy *foulard* which  
 about it was wound.

## IV.

Lord Alfred sprang forward at  
 once, with a bound.  
 He remembered the nurse of Lucile.  
 The old dame,  
 Whose teeth and whose eyes used  
 to beam when he came,  
 With a boy's eager step, in the  
 blithe days of yore,  
 To pass, unannounced, her young  
 mistress's door.  
 The old woman had fondled Lucile  
 on her knee  
 When she left, as an infant, far  
 over the sea,  
 In India, the tomb of a mother, un-  
 known,  
 To pine, a pale floweret, in great  
 Paris town.

She had soothed the child's sobs on  
 her breast, when she read  
 The letter that told her her father  
 was dead.  
 An astute, shrewd adventurer, who,  
 like Ulysses,  
 Had studied men, cities, laws, wars,  
 and the abysses  
 Of statecraft, with varying fortunes,  
 was he.  
 He had wandered the world through,  
 by land and by sea,  
 And knew it in most of its phases.  
 Strong will,  
 Subtle tact, and soft manners, had  
 given him skill  
 To conciliate Fortune, and courage  
 to brave  
 Her displeasure. Thrice ship-  
 wrecked, and cast by the wave  
 On his own quick resources, they  
 rarely had failed  
 His command: often baffled, he  
 ever prevailed,  
 In his combat with fate: to-day  
 flattered and fed  
 By monarchs, to-morrow in search  
 of mere bread.  
 The offspring of times trouble-  
 haunted, he came [name.  
 Of a family ruined, yet noble in  
 He lost sight of his fortune at  
 twenty in France;  
 And half statesman, half soldier,  
 and wholly Free-lance,  
 Had wandered in search of it, over  
 the world,  
 Into India.  
 But scarce had the nomad  
 unfurled  
 His wandering tent at Mysore, in  
 the smile  
 Of a Rajah (whose court he con-  
 trolled for awhile,  
 And whose council he prompted and  
 governed by stealth);  
 Scarce, indeed, had he wedded an  
 Indian of wealth,  
 Who died giving birth to this daugh-  
 ter, before

He was borne to the tomb of his  
 wife at Mysore.  
 His fortune, which fell to his or-  
 phan, perchance,  
 Had secured her a home with his  
 sister in France,  
 A lone woman, the last of the race  
 left. Lucile  
 Neither felt, nor affected, the wish  
 to conceal  
 The half-Eastern blood, which ap-  
 peared to bequeath  
 (Revealed now and then, though but  
 rarely, beneath  
 That outward repose that concealed  
 it in her)  
 A something half wild to her strange  
 character.  
 The nurse with the orphan, awhile  
 broken-hearted,  
 At the door of a convent in Paris  
 had parted.  
 But later, once more, with her mis-  
 tress she tarried,  
 When the girl, by that grim maiden  
 aunt, had been married  
 To a dreary old Count, who had  
 sullenly died,  
 With no claim on her tears, — she  
 had wept as a bride.  
 Said Lord Alfred, "Your mistress  
 expects me."  
 The crone  
 Oped the drawing-room door, and  
 there left him alone.

## v.

O'er the soft atmosphere of this  
 temple of grace  
 Rested silence and perfume. No  
 sound reached the place.  
 In the white curtains wavered the  
 delicate shade  
 Of the heaving acacias, through  
 which the breeze played.  
 O'er the smooth wooden floor, pol-  
 ished dark as a glass,  
 Fragrant white India matting ai-  
 lowed you to pass.

In light olive baskets, by window  
and door,  
Some hung from the ceiling, some  
crowding the floor,  
Rich wild-flowers plucked by Lucile  
from the hill,  
Seemed the room with their pas-  
sionate presence to fill:  
Blue aconite, hid in white roses, re-  
posed;  
The deep belladonna its vermeil  
disclosed;  
And the frail saponaire, and the  
tender bluebell,  
And the purple valerian, — each  
child of the fell  
And the solitude flourished, fed fair  
from the source  
Of waters the huntsman scarce  
heeds in his course,  
Where the chamois and lizard, with  
delicate hoof,  
Pause or flit through the pinnacled  
silence aloof.

## VI.

Here you felt by the sense of its  
beauty reposed,  
That you stood in a shrine of sweet  
thoughts. Half unclosed  
In the light slept the flowers: all  
was pure and at rest;  
All peaceful; all modest; all seemed  
self-possessed,  
And aware of the silence. No ves-  
tige or trace  
Of a young woman's coquetry trou-  
bled the place.  
He stood by the window. A cloud  
passed the sun.  
A light breeze uplifted the leaves,  
one by one.  
Just then Lucile entered the room,  
Undiscerned  
By Lord Alfred, whose face to the  
window was turned,  
In a strange reverie.

The time was, when Lucile,  
In beholding that man, could not  
help but reveal

The rapture, the fear which wrenched  
out every nerve  
In the heart of the girl from the  
woman's reserve.  
And now — she gazed at him, calm,  
smiling, — perchance  
Indifferent.

## VII.

Indifferently turning his glance,  
Alfred Vargrave encountered that  
gaze unaware.  
O'er a bodice snow-white streamed  
her soft dusky hair;  
A rose-bud half blown in her hand;  
in her eyes  
A half-pensive smile.

A sharp cry of surprise  
Escaped from his lips: some un-  
known agitation,  
An invincible trouble, a strange pal-  
pitation,  
Confused his ingenious and frivo-  
lous wit;  
Overtook, and entangled, and para-  
lyzed it.  
That wit so complacent and docile,  
that ever  
Lightly came at the call of the  
lightest endeavor,  
Ready coined, and availably current  
as gold,  
Which, secure of its value, so flu-  
ently rolled  
In free circulation from hand on to  
hand  
For the usage of all, at a moment's  
command;  
For once it rebelled, it was mute  
and unstirred,  
And he looked at Lucile without  
speaking a word.

## VIII.

Perhaps what so troubled him was,  
that the face  
On whose features he gazed had no  
more than a trace  
Of the face his remembrance had  
imagined for years.  
Yes! the face he remembered was  
faded with tears:



Grief had famished the figure, and  
 • dimmed the dark eyes,  
 And starved the pale lips, too ac-  
 quainted with sighs.  
 And that tender, and gracious, and  
 fond *coquetterie*  
 Of a woman who knows her least  
 ribbon to be  
 Something dear to the lips that so  
 warmly caress  
 Every sacred detail of her exquisite  
 dress,  
 In the careless toilet of Lucile, —  
 then too sad  
 To care aught to her changeable  
 beauty to add, —  
 Lord Alfred had never admired be-  
 fore!  
 Alas! poor Lucile, in those weak  
 days of yore,  
 Had neglected herself, never heed-  
 ing, nor thinking  
 (While the blossom and bloom of  
 her beauty were shrinking)  
 That sorrow can beautify only the  
 heart —  
 Not the face — of a woman; and  
 can but impart  
 Its endearment to one that has suf-  
 fered. In truth  
 Grief hath beauty for grief; but gay  
 youth loves gay youth.

## IX.

The woman that now met, unshrink-  
 ing, his gaze,  
 Seemed to bask in the silent but  
 sumptuous haze  
 Of that soft second summer, more  
 ripe than the first,  
 Which returns when the bud to the  
 blossom hath burst  
 In despite of the stormiest April.  
 Lucile  
 Had acquired that matchless uncon-  
 scious appeal  
 To the homage which none but a  
 churl would withhold —  
 That caressing and exquisite grace  
 — never bold,

Ever present — which just a few  
 women possess.  
 From a healthful repose, undisturbed  
 by the stress  
 Of unquiet emotions, her soft cheek  
 had drawn  
 A freshness as pure as the twilight  
 of dawn.  
 Her figure, though slight, had re-  
 vived everywhere  
 The luxurious proportions of youth;  
 and her hair —  
 Once shorn as an offering to pas-  
 sionate love —  
 Now floated or rested redundant  
 above  
 Her airy pure forehead and throat;  
 gathered loose  
 Under which, by one violet knot,  
 the profuse  
 Milk-white folds of a cool modest  
 garment reposed,  
 Rippled faint by the breast they had  
 hid, half disclosed,  
 And her simple attire thus in all  
 things revealed  
 The fine art which so artfully all  
 things concealed.

## X.

Lord Alfred, who never conceived  
 that Lucile  
 Could have looked so enchanting,  
 felt tempted to kneel  
 At her feet, and her pardon with  
 passion implore;  
 But the calm smile that met him  
 sufficed to restore  
 The pride and the bitterness needed  
 to meet  
 The occasion with dignity due and  
 discreet.

## XI.

“Madam,” — thus he began with a  
 voice reassured, —  
 “You see that your latest command  
 has secured  
 My immediate obedience, — presum-  
 ing I may  
 Consider my freedom restored from  
 this day.” —

"I had thought," said Lucile, with  
 a smile gay yet sad,  
 "That your freedom from me not a  
 fetter has had.  
 Indeed! . . . in my chains have you  
 rested till now?  
 I had not so flattered myself, I  
 avow!"  
 "For Heaven's sake, Madam," Lord  
 Alfred replied,  
 "Do not jest! has the moment no  
 sadness?" he sighed.  
 "'Tis an ancient tradition," she an-  
 swered, "a tale  
 Often told, — a position too sure to  
 prevail  
 In the end of all legends of love. If  
 we wrote,  
 When we first love, foreseeing that  
 hour yet remote,  
 Wherein of necessity each would  
 recall  
 From the other the poor foolish  
 records of all  
 Those emotions, whose pain, when  
 recorded, seemed bliss,  
 Should we write as we wrote? But  
 one thinks not of this!  
 At Twenty (who does not at Twen-  
 ty?) we write  
 Believing eternal the frail vows we  
 plight;  
 And we smile with a confident pity,  
 above [love:  
 The vulgar results of all poor human  
 For we deem, with that vanity com-  
 mon to youth,  
 Because what we feel in our bosoms,  
 in truth,  
 Is novel to us — that 'tis novel to  
 earth,  
 And will prove the exception, in  
 durance and worth,  
 To the great law to which all on  
 earth must incline.  
 The error was noble, the vanity fine!  
 Shall we blame it because we sur-  
 vive it? ah, no;  
 'Twas the youth of our youth, my  
 lord, is it not so?"

## XII.

Lord Alfred was mute. He remem-  
 bered her yet  
 A child, — the weak sport of each  
 moment's regret, [of life,  
 Blindly yielding herself to the errors  
 The deceptions of youth, and borne  
 down by the strife  
 And the tumult of passion; the  
 tremulous toy  
 Of each transient emotion of grief  
 or of joy.  
 But to watch her pronounce the  
 death-warrant of all  
 The illusions of life, — lift, un-  
 flinching, the pall  
 From the bier of the dead Past, —  
 that woman so fair,  
 And so young, yet her own self-sur-  
 vivor; who there  
 Traced her life's epitaph with a  
 finger so cold!  
 'Twas a picture that pained his self-  
 love to behold.  
 He himself knew — none better —  
 the things to be said  
 Upon subjects like this. Yet he  
 bowed down his head:  
 And as thus, with a trouble he could  
 not command,  
 He paused, crumpling the letters he  
 held in his hand,  
 "You know me enough," she con-  
 tinued, "or what  
 I would say is, you yet recollect (do  
 you not, [to know  
 Lord Alfred?) enough of my nature,  
 That these pledges of what was per-  
 haps long ago  
 A foolish affection, I do not recall  
 From those motives of prudence  
 which actuate all  
 Or most women when their love  
 ceases. Indeed,  
 If you have such a doubt, to dispel  
 it I need  
 But remind you that ten years these  
 letters have rested  
 Unreclaimed in your hands." A re-  
 proach seemed suggested

By these words. To meet it, Lord  
 Alfred looked up.  
 (His gaze had been fixed on a blue  
 Sèvres cup  
 With a look of profound connois-  
 seurship, — a smile  
 Of singular interest and care, all  
 this while.)  
 He looked up, and looked long in  
 the face of Lucile, [reveal  
 To mark if that face by a sign would  
 At the thought of Miss Darcy the  
 least jealous pain.  
 He looked keenly and long, yet he  
 looked there in vain.  
 "You are generous, Madam," he  
 murmured at last,  
 And into his voice a light irony  
 passed.  
 He had looked for reproaches, and  
 fully arranged  
 His forces. But straightway the  
 enemy changed  
 The position.

## XIII.

"Come!" gayly Lucile interposed,  
 With a smile whose divinely deep  
 sweetness disclosed  
 Some depth in her nature he never  
 had known,  
 While she tenderly laid her light  
 hand on his own,  
 "Do not think I abuse the occasion.  
 We gain  
 Justice, judgment, with years, or  
 else years are in vain.  
 From me not a single reproach can  
 you hear.  
 I have sinned to myself, — to the  
 world, — nay, I fear  
 To you chiefly. The woman who  
 loves should, indeed,  
 Be the friend of the man that she  
 loves. She should heed  
 Not her selfish and often mistaken  
 desires,  
 But his interest whose fate her own  
 interest inspires;  
 And, rather than seek to allure, for  
 her sake,

His life down the turbulent, fanciful  
 wake [art  
 Of impossible destinies, use all her  
 That his place in the world find its  
 place in her heart.  
 I, alas! — I perceived not this truth  
 till too late;  
 I tormented your youth, I have  
 darkened your fate.  
 Forgive me the ill I have done for  
 the sake  
 Of its long expiation!"

## XIV.

Lord Alfred, awake,  
 Seemed to wander from dream on  
 to dream. In that seat  
 Where he sat as a criminal, ready to  
 meet  
 His accuser, he found himself turned  
 by some change,  
 As surprising and all unexpected as  
 strange,  
 To the judge from whose mercy in-  
 dulgence was sought.  
 All the world's foolish pride in that  
 moment was naught;  
 He felt all his plausible theories  
 posed; [disclosed  
 And, thrilled by the beauty of nature  
 In the pathos of all he had witnessed,  
 his head  
 He bowed, and faint words self-  
 reproachfully said,  
 As he lifted her hand to his lips.  
 'Twas a hand  
 White, delicate, dimpled, warm,  
 languid, and bland.  
 The hand of a woman is often, in  
 youth,  
 Somewhat rough, somewhat red,  
 somewhat graceless, in truth;  
 Does its beauty refine, as its pulses  
 grow calm,  
 Or as Sorrow has crossed the life-  
 line in the palm?

## XV.

The more that he looked, that he  
 listened, the more  
 He discovered perfections unnoticed  
 before.

Less salient than once, less poetic,  
 perchance,  
 This woman who thus had survived  
 the romance  
 That had made him its hero, and  
 breathed him its sighs,  
 Seemed more charming a thousand  
 times o'er to his eyes.  
 Together they talked of the years  
 since when last  
 They parted, contrasting the present,  
 the past.  
 Yet no memory marred their light  
 converse. Lucile  
 Questioned much, with the interest  
 a sister might feel,  
 Of Lord Alfred's new life, — of Miss  
 Darcy, — her face,  
 Her temper, accomplishments, —  
 pausing to trace  
 The advantage derived from a  
 hymen so fit.  
 Of herself, she recounted with  
 humor and wit  
 Her journeys, her daily employ-  
 ments, the lands  
 She had seen, and the books she  
 had read, and the hands  
 She had shaken.

In all that she said there appeared  
 An amiable irony. Laughing, she  
 reared [touch  
 The temple of reason, with ever a  
 Of light scorn at her work, revealed  
 only so much  
 As there gleams, in the thyrsus  
 that Bacchanals bear,  
 Through the blooms of a garland  
 the point of a spear.  
 But above, and beneath, and beyond  
 all of this,  
 To that soul whose experience had  
 paralyzed bliss,  
 A benignant indulgence, to all  
 things resigned, [mind,  
 A justice, a sweetness, a meekness of  
 Gave a luminous beauty, as tender  
 and faint  
 And serene as the halo encircling a  
 saint.

## XVI.

Unobserved by Lord Alfred the time  
 fled by.  
 To each novel sensation spontane-  
 ously  
 He abandoned himself with that  
 ardor so strange  
 Which belongs to a mind grown ac-  
 customed to change.  
 He sought, with well-practised and  
 delicate art,  
 To surprise from Lucile the true  
 state of her heart;  
 But his efforts were vain, and the  
 woman, as ever,  
 More adroit than the man, baffled  
 every endeavor.  
 When he deemed he had touched  
 on some chord in her being,  
 At the touch it dissolved and was  
 gone. Ever fleeing  
 As ever he near it advanced, when  
 he thought  
 To have seized, and proceeded to  
 analyze aught  
 Of the moral existence, the absolute  
 soul,  
 Light as vapor the phantom escaped  
 his control.

## XVII.

From the hall, on a sudden, a sharp  
 ring was heard,  
 In the passage without a quick foot-  
 step there stirred.  
 At the door knocked the negress,  
 and thrust in her head,  
 "The Duke de Luvois had just en-  
 tered," she said,  
 "And insisted" —  
 "The Duke!" cried Lucile (as she  
 spoke  
 The Duke's step, approaching, a  
 light echo woke).  
 "Say I do not receive till the even-  
 ing. Explain,"  
 As she glanced at Lord Alfred, she  
 added again,  
 "I have business of private impor-  
 tance."

There came  
O'er Lord Alfred at once, at the  
sound of that name,  
An invincible sense of vexation.  
He turned [discerned  
To Lucile, and he fancied he faintly  
On her face an indefinite look of  
confusion.

On his mind instantaneously flashed  
the conclusion,  
That his presence had caused it.

He said, with a sneer  
Which he could not repress, "Let  
not *me* interfere  
With the claims on your time, lady!  
when you are free  
From more pleasant engagements,  
allow me to see  
And to wait on you later."

The words were not said  
Ere he wished to recall them. He  
bitterly read  
The mistake he had made in Lucile's  
flashing eye.

Inclining her head, as in haughty  
reply,  
More reproachful perchance than  
all uttered rebuke,  
She said merely, resuming her seat,  
"Tell the Duke  
He may enter."

And vexed with his own words  
and hers,  
Alfred Vargrave bowed low to Lu-  
cile de Nevers,  
Passed the easement and entered  
the garden. Before  
His shadow was fled the Duke  
stood at the door.

## XVIII.

When left to his thoughts in the  
garden alone,  
Alfred Vargrave stood, strange to  
himself. With dull tone  
Of importance, through cities of  
rose and carnation,  
Went the bee on his business from  
station to station.  
The minute mirth of summer was  
shrill all around;

Its incessant small voices like stings  
seemed to sound

On his sore angry sense. He stood  
grieving the hot

Solid sun with his shadow, not  
stirred from the spot.

The last look of Lucile still bewil-  
dered, perplexed,

And reproached him. The Duke's  
visit goaded and vexed.

He had not yet given the letters.  
Again

He must visit Lucile. He resolved  
to remain

Where he was till the Duke went.  
In short, he would stay,

Were it only to know when the  
Duke went away.

But just as he formed this resolve,  
he perceived

Approaching towards him, between  
the thick-leaved

And luxuriant laurels. Lucile and  
the Duke.

Thus surprised, his first thought  
was to seek for some nook

Whence he might, unobserved, from  
the garden retreat.

They had not yet seen him. The  
sound of their feet

And their voices had warned him  
in time. They were walking

Towards him. The Duke (a true  
Frenchman) was talking

With the action of Talma. He saw  
at a glance

That they barred the sole path to  
the gateway. No chance

Of escape save in instant conceal-  
ment! Deep-dipped

In thick foliage, an arbor stood  
near. In he slipped,

Saved from sight, as in front of  
that ambush they passed,

Still conversing. Beneath a labur-  
num at last

They paused, and sat down on a  
bench in the shade.

So close that he could not but hear  
what they said.

XIX.

LUCILE.

Duke, I scarcely conceive . . .

LUVUOIS.

Ah, forgive! . . . I desired  
So deeply to see you to-day. You  
retired

So early last night from the ball . . .  
this whole week

I have seen you pale, silent, pre-  
occupied . . . speak,

Speak, Lucile, and forgive me! . . .  
I know that I am

A rash fool—but I love you! I love  
you, Madame,

More than language can say! Do  
not deem, O Lucile,

That the love I no longer have  
strength to conceal

Is a passing caprice! It is strange  
to my nature,

It has made me, unknown to myself,  
a new creature.

I implore you to sanction and save  
the new life

Which I lay at your feet with this  
prayer—Be my wife;

Stoop, and raise me!

Lord Alfred could scarcely restrain  
The sudden, acute pang of anger  
and pain

With which he had heard this. As  
though to some wind

The leaves of the hushed windless  
laurels behind

The two thus in converse were sud-  
denly stirred.

The sound half betrayed him. They  
started. He heard

The low voice of Lucile; but so  
faint was its tone

That her answer escaped him.

Lavois hurried on,  
As though in remonstrance with  
what had been spoken.

“Nay, I know it, Lucile! but your  
heart was not broken

By the trial in which all its fibres  
were proved.

Love, perchance, you mistrust, yet  
you need to be loved.

You mistake your own feelings. I  
fear you mistake

What so ill I interpret, those feel-  
ings which make

Words like these vague and feeble.  
Whatever your heart

May have suffered of yore, this can  
only impart [feel.

A pity profound to the love which I  
Hush! hush! I know all. Tell me  
nothing, Lucile.”

“You know all, Duke!” she said;  
“well then, know that, in truth,

I have learned from the rude lesson  
taught to my youth

From my own heart to shelter my  
life; to mistrust

The heart of another. We are what  
we must,

And not what we would be. I know  
that one hour

Assures not another. The will and  
the power

Are diverse.”

“O madam!” he answered, “you  
fence

With a feeling you know to be true  
and intense.

’Tis not *my* life, Lucile, that I plead  
for alone:

If your nature I know, ’tis no less  
for your own.

That nature will prey on itself; it  
was made

To influence others. Consider,” he  
said

“That genius craves power,— what  
scope for it here?

Gifts less noble to *me* give command  
of that sphere

In which genius *is* power. Such  
gifts you despise?

But you do not disdain what such  
gifts realize!

I offer you, Lady, a name not un-  
known—

A fortune which worthless, without  
you, is grown—

All my life at your feet I lay down —  
at your feet  
A heart which for you, and you  
only, can beat.

LUCILE.

That heart, Duke, that life — I re-  
spect both. The name  
And position you offer, and all that  
you claim  
In behalf of their nobler employ-  
ment, I feel  
To deserve what, in turn, I now ask  
you —

LUVOIS.

Lucile!

LUCILE.

I ask you to leave me —

LUVOIS.

You do not reject?

LUCILE.

I ask you to leave me the time to re-  
flect.

LUVOIS.

You ask me? —

LUCILE.

— The time to reflect.

LUVOIS.

Say — One word!

May I hope?

The reply of Lucile was not heard  
By Lord Alfred; for just then she  
rose, and moved on.  
The Duke bowed his lips o'er her  
hand, and was gone.

XX.

Not a sound save the birds in the  
bushes. And when  
Alfred Vargrave reeled forth to the  
sunlight again,  
He just saw the white robe of the  
woman recede  
As she entered the house.

Scarcely conscious indeed

Of his steps, he too followed, and  
entered.

XXI.

He entered

Unnoticed; Lucile never stirred: so  
concentred

And wholly absorbed in her thoughts  
she appeared.

Her back to the window was turned.  
As he neared

The sofa, her face from the glass  
was reflected.

Her dark eyes were fixed on the  
ground. Pale, dejected,

And lost in profound meditation she  
seemed.

Softly, silently, over her drooped  
shoulders streamed

The afternoon sunlight. The cry  
of alarm

And surprise which escaped her, as  
now on her arm

Alfred Vargrave let fall a hand icily  
cold [told

And clammy as death, all too cruelly  
How far he had been from her  
thoughts.

XXII.

All his cheek

Was disturbed with the effort it cost  
him to speak.

“It was not my fault. I have heard  
all,” he said.

“Now the letters — and farewell,  
Lucile! When you wed

May — ”

The sentence broke short, like a  
weapon that snaps

When the weight of a man is upon it.  
“Perhaps,”

Said Lucile (her sole answer revealed  
in the flush

Of quick color which up to her brows  
seemed to rush

In reply to those few broken words),  
“this farewell

Is our last, Alfred Vargrave, in life.  
Who can tell?

Let us part without bitterness. Here  
are your letters.

Be assured I retain you no more in  
my fetters!” —

She laughed, as she said this, a  
 little sad laugh,  
 And stretched out her hand with  
 the letters. And half  
 Wroth to feel his wrath rise, and  
 unable to trust  
 His own powers of restraint, in his  
 bosom he thrust  
 The packet she gave, with a short  
 angry sigh,  
 Bowed his head, and departed with-  
 out a reply.

## XXIII.

And Lucile was alone. And the  
 men of the world  
 Were gone back to the world. And  
 the world's self was furled  
 Far away from the heart of the  
 woman. Her hand  
 Drooped, and from it, unloosed  
 from their frail silken band,  
 Fell those early love-letters, strewn,  
 scattered, and shed  
 At her feet — life's lost blossoms!  
 Dejected, her head  
 On her bosom was bowed. Her gaze  
 vaguely strayed o'er  
 Those strewn records of passionate  
 moments no more.  
 From each page to her sight leapt  
 some word that belied  
 The composure with which she that  
 day had denied  
 Every claim on her heart to those  
 poor perished years.  
 They avenged themselves now, and  
 she burst into tears.

## CANTO IV.

## I.

*Letter from* COUSIN JOHN *to* COUSIN  
 ALFRED.

"BIGORRE, Thursday.

"TIME up, you rascal! Come back,  
 or be hanged.  
 Matilda grows peevish. Her mother  
 harangued

For a whole hour this morning about  
 you. The deuce!  
 What on earth can I say to you? —  
 Nothing's of use.  
 And the blame of the whole of your  
 shocking behavior  
 Falls on *me*, sir! Come back, — do  
 you hear? — or I leave your  
 Affairs, and adjure you forever.  
 Come back  
 To your anxious betrothed; and  
 perplexed

"COUSIN JACK."

## II.

Alfred needed, in truth, no entrea-  
 ties from John  
 To increase his impatience to fly  
 from Luchon.  
 All the place was now fraught with  
 sensations of pain  
 Which, whilst in it, he strove to  
 escape from in vain.  
 A wild instinct warned him to fly  
 from a place  
 Where he felt that some fatal event,  
 swift of pace,  
 Was approaching his life. In de-  
 spite his endeavor  
 To think of Matilda, her image for-  
 ever  
 Was effaced from his fancy by that  
 of Lucile.  
 From the ground which he stood  
 on he felt himself reel.  
 Scared, alarmed by those feelings  
 to which, on the day  
 Just before, all his heart had so  
 soon given way,  
 When he caught, with a strange  
 sense of fear, for assistance,  
 At what was, till then, the great  
 fact in existence,  
 'Twas a phantom he grasped.

## III.

Having sent for his guide,  
 He ordered his horse, and deter-  
 mined to ride  
 Back forthwith to Bigorre.



Then, the guide, who well knew  
 Every haunt of those hills, said the  
 wild lake of Oo  
 Lay a league from Luchon; and  
 suggested a track  
 By the lake to Bigorre, which,  
 transversing the back  
 Of the mountain, avoided a circuit  
 between  
 Two long valleys; and thinking,  
 "Perchance change of scene  
 May create change of thought,"  
 Alfred Vargrave agreed,  
 Mounted horse, and set forth to  
 Bigorre at full speed.

## IV.

His guide rode beside him.  
 The king of the guides!  
 The gallant Bernard! ever boldly  
 he rides,  
 Ever gayly he sings! For to him,  
 from of old,  
 The hills have confided their secrets,  
 and told  
 Where the white partridge lies, and  
 the cock o' the woods;  
 Where the izard flits fine through  
 the cold solitudes;  
 Where the bear lurks perdu; and  
 the lynx on his prey  
 At nightfall descends, when the  
 mountains are gray;  
 Where the sassafras blooms, and  
 the bluebell is born,  
 And the wild rhododendron first  
 reddens at morn;  
 Where the souree of the waters is  
 fine as a thread;  
 How the storm on the wild Mala-  
 detta is spread;  
 Where the thunder is hoarded, the  
 snow lie asleep,  
 Whence the torrents are fed, and  
 the cataracts leap;  
 And, familiarly known in the ham-  
 lets, the vales  
 Have whispered to him all their  
 thousand love-tales;  
 He has laughed with the girls, he  
 has leaped with the boys;

Ever blithe, ever bold, ever boon,  
 he enjoys  
 An existence untroubled by envy or  
 strife,  
 While he feeds on the dews and the  
 juices of life.  
 And so lightly he sings, and so gayly  
 he rides,  
 For BERNARD LE SAUTEUR is the  
 king of all guides!

## V.

But Bernard found, that day, neither  
 song nor love-tale,  
 Nor adventure, nor laughter, nor  
 legend avail  
 To arouse from his deep and pro-  
 found reverie  
 Him that silent beside him rode fast  
 as could be.

## VI.

Ascending the mountain they slack-  
 ened their pace,  
 And the marvellous prospect each  
 moment changed face.  
 The breezy and pure inspirations of  
 morn  
 Breathed about them. The scarp'd  
 ravaged mountains, all worn  
 By the torrents, whose course they  
 watched faintly meander,  
 Were alive with the diamonded shy  
 salamander.  
 They paused o'er the bosom of pur-  
 ple abysses,  
 And wound through a region of  
 green wildernesses;  
 The waters went wirbling above and  
 around,  
 The forests hung heaped in their  
 shadows profound.  
 Here the Larboust, and there Aven-  
 tin, Castellon,  
 Which the Demon of Tempest, de-  
 scending upon,  
 Had wasted with fire, and the peace-  
 ful Cazeaux  
 They marked; and far down in the  
 sunshine below,  
 Half dipped in a valley of airiest  
 blue,

The white happy homes of the vil-  
lage of Oo,  
Where the age is yet golden.

And high overhead  
The wrecks of the combat of Titans  
were spread.

Red granite and quartz, in the alche-  
mic sun,

Fused their splendors of crimson  
and crystal in one;

And deep in the moss gleamed the  
delicate shells,

And the dew lingered fresh in the  
heavy harebells;

The large violet burned; the cam-  
panula blue;

And Autumn's own flower, the saf-  
fron, peered through

The red-berried brambles and thick  
sassafras;

And fragrant with thyme was the  
delicate grass;

And high up, and higher, and high-  
est of all,

The secular phantom of snow!

O'er the wall  
Of a gray sunless glen gaping drowsy  
below,

That aerial spectre, revealed in the  
glow

Of the great golden dawn, hovers  
faint on the eye,

And appears to grow in, and grow  
cut of, the sky,

And plays with the fancy, and baf-  
fles the sight.

Only reached by the vast rosy ripple  
of light,

And the cool star of eve, the Impe-  
rial Thing, [king

Half unreal, like some mythological  
That dominates all in a fable of old,  
Takes command of a valley as fair  
to behold

As aught in old fables; and, seen  
or unseen,

Dwells aloof over all, in the vast  
and serene

Sacred sky, where the footsteps of  
spirits are furled

'Mid the clouds beyond which  
spreads the infinite world  
Of man's last aspirations, unfath-  
omed, untrod,  
Save by Even and Morn, and the  
angels of God.

## VII.

Meanwhile, as they journeyed, that  
serpentine road,

Now abruptly reversed, unexpect-  
edly showed

A gay cavalcade some few feet in  
advance.

Alfred Vargrave's heart beat; for  
he saw at a glance

The slight form of Lucile in the  
midst. His next look

Showed him, joyously ambling be-  
side her, the Duke.

The rest of the troop which had  
thus caught his ken

He knew not, nor noticed them,  
(women and men).

They were laughing and talking to-  
gether. Soon after

His sudden appearance suspended  
their laughter.

## VIII.

"You here! . . . I imagined you  
far on your way

To Bigorre!" . . . said Lucile.

"What has caused you to stay?"

"I *am* on my way to Bigorre," he  
replied,

"But, since *my* way would seem to  
be *yours*, let me ride

For one moment beside you." And  
then, with a stoop,

At her ear, . . . "and forgive me!"

## IX.

By this time the troop  
Had gathered its numbers.

Lucile was as pale  
As the cloud 'neath their feet, on  
its way to the vale.

The Duke had observed it, nor  
quitted her side,

For even one moment, the whole of  
the ride.

Alfred smiled, as he thought, "he  
is jealous of her!"  
And the thought of this jealousy  
added a spur  
To his firm resolution and effort to  
please.  
He talked much; was witty, and  
quite at his ease.

## X.

After noontide, the clouds, which  
had traversed the east  
Half the day, gathered closer, and  
rose and increased.  
The air changed and chilled. As  
though out of the ground,  
There ran up the trees a confused  
hissing sound,  
And the wind rose. The guides  
sniffed, like chamois, the air,  
And looked at each other, and halt-  
ed, and there  
Unbuckled the cloaks from the sad-  
dles. The white  
Aspens rustled, and turned up their  
frail leaves in fright.  
All announced the approach of the  
tempest.

## Ere long,

Thick darkness descended the moun-  
tains among;  
And a vivid, vindictive, and serpen-  
tine flash  
Gored the darkness, and shore it  
across with a gash.  
The rain fell in large heavy drops.  
And anon  
Broke the thunder.

The horses took fright, every one.  
The Duke's in a moment was far  
out of sight.  
The guides whooped. The band  
was obliged to alight;  
And, dispersed up the perilous path-  
way, walked blind  
To the darkness before from the  
darkness behind.

## XI.

And the Storm is abroad in the  
mountains!

He fills

The crouched hollows and all the  
oracular hills  
With dread voices of power. A  
roused million or more  
Of wild echoes reluctantly rise from  
their hoar  
Immemorial ambush, and roll in the  
wake  
Of the cloud, whose reflection leaves  
vivid the lake.  
And the wind, that wild robber, for  
plunder descends  
From invisible lands, o'er those  
black mountain ends;  
He howls as he hounds down his  
prey; and his lash  
Tears the hair of the timorous wan  
mountain-ash,  
That clings to the rocks, with her  
garments all torn,  
Like a woman in fear; then he blows  
his hoarse horn,  
And is off, the fierce guide of de-  
struction and terror,  
Up the desolate heights, 'mid an  
intricate error  
Of mountain and mist.

## XII.

There is war in the skies!  
Lo! the black-winged legions of  
tempest arise  
O'er those sharp splintered rocks  
that are gleaming below  
In the soft light, so fair and so fatal,  
as though  
Some seraph burned through them,  
the thunder-bolt searching  
Which the black cloud unbosomed  
just now. Lo! the lurching  
And shivering pine-trees, like phan-  
toms, that seem  
To waver above, in the dark; and  
yon stream,  
How it hurries and roars, on its way  
to the white  
And paralyzed lake there, appalled  
at the sight  
Of the things seen in heaven!

## XIII.

Through the darkness and awe  
That had gathered around him,  
Lord Alfred now saw,  
Revealed in the fierce and evanish-  
ing glare  
Of the lightning that momentarily  
pulsed through the air,  
A woman alone on a shelf of the  
hill,  
With her cheek coldly propped on  
her hand, — and as still  
As the rock that she sat on, which  
beetled above  
The black lake beneath her.

All terror, all love,  
Added speed to the instinct with  
which he rushed on.  
For one moment the blue lightning  
swathed the whole stone  
In its lurid embrace: like the sleek  
dazzling snake  
That encircles a sorceress, charmed  
for her sake  
And lulled by her loveliness; fawn-  
ing, it played  
And caressingly twined round the  
feet and the head  
Of the woman who sat there, un-  
daunted and calm  
As the soul of that solitude, listing  
the psalm  
Of the plangent and laboring temp-  
est roll slow  
From the caldron of midnight and  
vapor below.  
Next moment from bastion to bas-  
tion, all round,  
Of the siege-circled mountains,  
there tumbled the sound  
Of the battering thunder's indefinite  
peal,  
And Lord Alfred had sprung to the  
feet of Lucile.

## XIV.

She started. Once more, with its  
flickering wand,  
The lightning approached her. In  
terror, her hand

Alfred Vargrave had seized within  
his; and he felt  
The light fingers that coldly and  
lingeringly dwelt  
In the grasp of his own, tremble  
faintly.

“See! see!  
Where the whirlwind hath stricken  
and strangled yon tree!”  
She exclaimed, . . . “like the pas-  
sion that brings on its breath,  
To the being it embraces, destruc-  
tion and death!  
Alfred Vargrave, the lightning is  
round you!”

“Lucile!  
I hear — I see — naught but your-  
self. I can feel  
Nothing here but your presence.  
My pride fights in vain  
With the truth that leaps from me.  
We two meet again  
'Neath yon terrible heaven that is  
watching above  
To avenge if I lie when I swear  
that I love, —  
And beneath yonder terrible heaven,  
at your feet, [entreat  
I humble my head and my heart. I  
Your pardon, Lucile, for the past, —  
I implore  
For the future your mercy, — im-  
plore it with more  
Of passion than prayer ever  
breathed. By the power  
Which invisibly touches us both in  
this hour,  
By the rights I have o'er you, Lu-  
cile, I demand” —

“The rights!” . . . said Lucile, and  
drew from him her hand.

“Yes, the rights! for what greater  
to man may belong  
Than the right to repair in the fu-  
ture the wrong  
To the past? and the wrong I have  
done you, of yore,  
Hath bequeathed to me all the sad  
right to restore,

To retrieve, to amend! I, who injured your life,  
 Urge the right to repair it, Lucile!  
 Be my wife,  
 My guide, my good angel, my all upon earth,  
 And accept, for the sake of what yet may give worth  
 To my life, its contrition!"

## XV.

He paused, for there came  
 O'er the cheek of Lucile a swift flush like the flame  
 That illumined at moments the darkness o'erhead.  
 With a voice faint and marred by emotion, she said,  
 "And your pledge to another?"

## XVI.

"Hush, hush!" he exclaimed,  
 My honor will live where my love lives, unshamed.  
 'Twere poor honor, indeed, to another to give  
 That life of which *you* keep the heart. Could I live  
 In the light of those young eyes, suppressing a lie?  
 Alas, no! *your* hand holds my whole destiny.

I can never recall what my lips have avowed;  
 In your love lies whatever can render me proud.  
 For the great crime of all my existence hath been  
 To have known you in vain. And the duty best seen,  
 And most hallowed, — the duty most sacred and sweet,  
 Is that which hath led me, Lucile, to your feet.

O speak! and restore me the blessing I lost  
 When I lost you, — my pearl of all pearls beyond cost!  
 And restore to your own life its youth, and restore  
 The vision, the rapture, the passion of yore!

Ere our brows had been dimmed in the dust of the world,  
 When our souls their white wings yet exulting, unfurled!  
 For your eyes rest no more on the unquiet man,  
 The wild star of whose course its pale orbit outran,  
 Whom the formless indefinite future of youth,  
 With its lying allurements, distracted. In truth  
 I have wearily wandered the world, and I feel  
 That the least of your lovely regards, O Lucile,  
 Is worth all the world can afford, and the dream  
 Which, though followed forever, forever doth seem  
 As fleeting, and distant, and dim, as of yore  
 When it brooded in twilight, at dawn, on the shore  
 Of life's untraversed ocean! I know the sole path  
 To repose, which my desolate destiny hath,  
 Is the path by whose course to your feet I return.  
 And who else, O Lucile, will so truly discern,  
 And so deeply revere, all the passionate strength,  
 The sublimity in you, as he whom at length  
 These have saved from himself, for the truth they reveal  
 To his worship?"

## XVII.

She spoke not; but Alfred could feel  
 The light hand and arm, that upon him reposed,  
 Thrill and tremble. Those dark eyes of hers were half closed;  
 But, under their languid mysterious fringe,  
 A passionate softness was beaming  
 One tinge

Of faint inward fire flushed transparently through  
 The delicate, pallid, and pure olive hue  
 Of the cheek, half averted and drooped. The rich bosom  
 Heaved, as when in the heart of a ruffled rose-blossom  
 A bee is imprisoned and struggles.

## XVIII.

Meanwhile

The sun, in his setting, sent up the last smile  
 Of his power to baffle the storm. And, behold!  
 O'er the mountains embattled, his armies, all gold,  
 Rose and rested: while far up the dim airy crags,  
 Its artillery silenced, its banners in rags,  
 The rear of the tempest its sullen retreat  
 Drew off slowly, receding in silence, gathering afar,  
 Had already sent forward one bright, signal star.  
 The curls of her soft and luxuriant hair,  
 From the dark riding-hat, which Lucile used to wear,  
 Had escaped; and Lord Alfred now covered with kisses  
 The redolent warmth of those long falling tresses.  
 Neither he, nor Lucile, felt the rain, which not yet  
 Had ceased falling around them; when, splashed, drenched,  
 and wet,  
 The Duc de Luvois down the rough mountain course  
 Approached them as fast as the road, and his horse,  
 Which was limping, would suffer. The beast had just now  
 Lost his footing, and over the perilous brow

Of the storm-haunted mountain his master had thrown;  
 But the Duke, who was agile, had leaped to a stone,  
 And the horse, being bred to the instinct which fills  
 The breast of the wild mountaineer in these hills,  
 Had scrambled again to his feet; and now master  
 And horse bore about them the signs of disaster,  
 As they heavily footed their way through the mist,  
 The horse with his shoulder, the Duke with his wrist,  
 Bruised and bleeding.

## XIX.

If ever your feet, like my own, O reader, have traversed these mountains alone,  
 Have you felt your identity shrink and contract  
 In the presence of nature's immensities? Say,  
 Have you hung o'er the torrent, bedewed with its spray,  
 And, leaving the rock-way, contorted and rolled,  
 Like a huge couchant Typhon, fold heaped over fold,  
 Tracked the summits, from which every step that you tread  
 Rolls the loose stones, with thunder below, to the bed  
 Of invisible waters, whose mystical sound  
 Fills with awful suggestions the dizzy profound?  
 And, laboring onwards, at last through a break  
 In the walls of the world, burst at once on the lake?  
 If you have, this description I might have withheld.  
 You remember how strangely your bosom has swelled

At the vision revealed. On the  
overworked soil  
Of this planet, enjoyment is sharp-  
ened by toil;  
And one seems, by the pain of as-  
cending the height,  
To have conquered a claim to that  
wonderful sight.

## XX.

Hail, virginal daughter of cold Es-  
pingo!  
Hail, Naiad, whose realm is the  
cloud and the snow;  
For o'er thee the angels have  
whitened their wings,  
And the thirst of the seraphs is  
quenched at the springs.  
What hand hath, in heaven, upheld  
thine expanse?  
When the breath of creation first  
fashioned fair France,  
Did the Spirit of Ill, in his down-  
throw appearing,  
Bruise the world, and thus hollow  
thy basin while falling?  
Ere the mammoth was born hath  
some monster unnamed  
The base of thy mountainous pedes-  
tal framed?  
And later, when Power to Beauty  
was wed,  
Did some delicate fairy embroider  
thy bed  
With the fragile valerian and wild  
columbine?

## XXI.

But thy secret thou keepest, and I  
will keep mine;  
For once gazing on thee, it flashed  
on my soul,  
All that secret! I saw in a vision  
the whole  
Vast design of the ages; what was  
and shall be!  
Hands unseen raised the veil of a  
great mystery  
For one moment. I saw, and I  
heard; and my heart  
Bore witness within me to infinite  
art,

In infinite power proving infinite  
love;

Caught the great choral chant,  
marked the dread pageant  
move —

The divine Whence and Whither of  
life! But, O daughter  
Of Oo, not more safe in the deep  
silent water

Is thy secret, than mine in my heart  
Even so.

What I then saw and heard, the  
world never shall know.

## XXII.

The dimness of eve o'er the valleys  
had closed,

The rain had ceased falling, the  
mountains reposed.

The stars had enkindled in luminous  
courses

Their slow-sliding lamps, when, re-  
mounting their horses,

The riders retraversed that mighty  
serration

Of rock-work. Thus left to its own  
desolation,

The lake, from whose glimmering  
limits the last

Transient pomp of the pageants of  
sunset had passed,

Drew into its bosom the darkness,  
and only

Admitted within it one image, — a  
And tremulous phantom of flicker-  
ing light

That followed the mystical moon  
through the night.

## XXIII.

It was late when o'er Luchon at  
last they descended.

To her châlet, in silence, Lord Al-  
fred attended

Lucile. As they parted she whis-  
pered him low,

“ You have made to me, Alfred, an  
offer I know

All the worth of, believe me. I can-  
not reply

Without time for reflection. Good  
night! — not good by.”

“Alas! ’tis the very same answer  
you made  
To the Duc de Luvois but a day  
since,” he said.  
“No, Alfred! the very same, no,”  
she replied.  
Her voice shook. “If you love me,  
obey me.  
Abide my answer, to-morrow.”

## XXIV.

Alas, Cousin Jack!  
You Cassandra in breeches and  
boots! turn your back  
To the ruins of Troy. Prophet,  
seek not for glory  
Amongst thine own people.  
I follow my story.

## CANTO V.

## I.

UP! — forth again, Pegasus! —  
“Many’s the slip,”  
Hath the proverb well said, “’twixt  
the cup and the lip!”  
How blest should we be, have I  
often conceived,  
Had we really achieved what we  
nearly achieved!  
We but catch at the skirts of the  
thing we would be,  
And fall back on the lap of a false  
destiny.  
So it will be, so has been, since this  
world began!  
And the happiest, noblest, and best  
part of man  
Is the part which he never hath  
fully played out:  
For the first and last word in life’s  
volume is — Doubt.  
The face the most fair to our vision  
allowed  
Is the face we encounter and lose in  
the crowd.  
The thought that most thrills our  
existence is one  
Which, before we can frame it in  
language, is gone.

O Horace! the rustic still rests by  
the river,  
But the river flows on, and flows  
past him forever!  
Who can sit down, and say, . . .  
“What I will be, I will”?  
Who stand up, and affirm . . .  
“What I was, I am still”?  
Who is it that must not, if ques-  
tioned, say, . . . “What  
I would have remained, or become,  
I am not”?  
We are ever behind, or beyond, or  
beside [hide  
Our intrinsic existence. Forever at  
And seek with our souls. Not in  
Hades alone  
Doth Sisyphus roll, ever frustrate,  
the stone,  
Do the Danaïds ply, ever vainly, the  
sieve. [izens give.  
Tasks as futile does earth to its den-  
Yet there’s none so unhappy, but  
what he hath been  
Just about to be happy, at some  
time, I ween;  
And none so beguiled and defrauded  
by chance,  
But what once, in his life, some  
minute circumstance  
Would have fully sufficed to secure  
him the bliss  
Which, missing it then, he forever  
must miss;  
And to most of us, ere we go down  
to the grave,  
Life, relenting, accords the good  
gift we would have;  
But, as though by some stange im-  
perfection in fate,  
The good gift, when it comes, comes  
a moment too late.  
The Future’s great veil our breath  
fitfully flaps,  
And behind it broods ever the migh-  
ty Perhaps.  
Yet! there’s many a slip ’twixt the  
cup and the lip;  
But while o’er the brim of life’s  
beaker I dip



Though the cup may next moment  
 be shattered, the wine  
 Spilt, one deep health I'll pledge,  
 and that health shall be thine,  
 O being of beauty and bliss! seen  
 and known  
 In the deeps of my soul, and pos-  
 sessed there alone!  
 My days know thee not; and my  
 lips name thee never.  
 Thy place in my poor life is vacant  
 forever.  
 We have met: we have parted. No  
 more is recorded  
 In my annals on earth. This alone  
 was afforded  
 To the man whom men knew me, or  
 deem me, to be.  
 But, far down, in the depth of my  
 life's mystery  
 (Like the siren that under the deep  
 ocean dwells,  
 Whom the wind as it walls, and the  
 wave as it swells,  
 Cannot stir in the calm of her coral-  
 line halls,  
 Mid the world's adamantine and  
 dim pedestals;  
 At whose feet sit the sylphs and sea  
 fairies; for whom  
 The almondine glimmers, the soft  
 samphires bloom) —  
 Thou abidest and reignest forever,  
 O Queen  
 Of that better world which thou  
 swayest unseen!  
 My one perfect mistress! my all  
 things in all!  
 Thee by no vulgar name known to  
 men do I call:  
 For the seraphs have named thee to  
 me in my sleep, [keep.  
 And that name is a secret I sacredly  
 But, wherever this nature of mine  
 is most fair,  
 And its thoughts are the purest —  
 beloved, thou art there!  
 And whatever is noblest in aught  
 that I do, [too.  
 Is done to exalt and to worship thee

The world gave thee not to me, no,  
 and the world  
 Cannot take thee away from me  
 now. I have furl'd  
 The wings of my spirit about thy  
 bright head;  
 At thy feet are my soul's immortal-  
 ities spread.  
 Thou mightest have been to me  
 much. Thou art more.  
 And in silence I worship, in dark-  
 ness adore.  
 If life be not that which without us  
 we find —  
 Chance, accident, merely — but  
 rather the mind,  
 And the soul which, within us, sur-  
 viveth these things,  
 If our real existence have truly its  
 springs  
 Less in that which we do than in  
 that which we feel,  
 Not in vain do I worship, not hope-  
 less I kneel!  
 For then, though I name thee not  
 mistress or wife,  
 Thou art mine — and mine only, —  
 O life of my life!  
 And though many's the slip 'twixt  
 the cup and the lip,  
 Yet while o'er the brim of life's  
 beaker I dip,  
 While there's life on the lip, while  
 there's warmth in the wine,  
 One deep health I'll pledge, and  
 that health shall be thine!

## II.

This world, on whose peaceable  
 breast we repose  
 Unconvulsed by alarm, once con-  
 fused in the throes  
 Of a tumult divine, sea and land,  
 moist and dry,  
 And in fiery fusion commixed earth  
 and sky.  
 Time cooled it, and calmed it, and  
 taught it to go  
 The round of its orbit in peace, long  
 ago.

The wind changeth and whirleth continually :  
 All the rivers run down and run into the sea :  
 The wind whirleth about, and is presently stilled :  
 All the rivers run down, yet the sea is not filled :  
 The sun goeth forth from his chambers : the sun Ariseth, and lo ! he descendeth anon.  
 All returns to its place. Use and Habit are powers  
 Far stronger than Passion, in this world of ours.  
 The great laws of life readjust their infraction,  
 And to every emotion appoint a reaction.

## III.

Alfred Vargrave had time, after leaving Lucile,  
 To review the rash step he had taken, and feel  
 What the world would have called "*his erroneous position.*"  
 Thought obtruded its claim, and enforced recognition :  
 Like a creditor who, when the gloss is worn out  
 On the coat which we once wore with pleasure, no doubt,  
 Sends us in his account for the garment we bought.  
 Every spendthrift to passion is debtor to thought.

## IV.

He felt ill at ease with himself. He could feel  
 Little doubt what the answer would be from Lucile.  
 Her eyes, when they parted, — her voice, when they met,  
 Still enraptured his heart, which they haunted. And yet,  
 Though, exulting, he deemed himself loved, where he loved,  
 Through his mind a vague self-ac-cusation there moved.

O'er his fancy, when fancy was fairest, would rise  
 The infantine face of Matilda, with eyes  
 So sad, so reproachful, so cruelly kind,  
 That his heart failed within him. In vain did he find  
 A thousand just reasons for what he had done :  
 The vision that troubled him would not be gone.  
 In vain did he say to himself, and with truth,  
 " Matilda has beauty, and fortune, and youth ;  
 And her heart is too young to have deeply involved  
 All its hopes in the tie which must now be dissolved.  
 'Twere a false sense of honor in me to suppress  
 The sad truth which I owe it to her to confess.  
 And what reason have I to presume this poor life  
 Of my own, with its languid and frivolous strife,  
 And without what alone might endear it to her,  
 Were a boon all so precious, indeed, to confer,  
 Its withdrawal can wrong her ?  
 " It is not as though  
 I were bound to some poor village maiden, I know,  
 Unto whose simple heart mine were all upon earth,  
 Or to whose simple fortunes my own could give worth.  
 Matilda, in all the world's gifts will not miss  
 Aught that I could procure her.  
 'Tis best as it is ! "

## V.

In vain did he say to himself  
 " When I came  
 To this fatal spot, I had nothing to blame

Or reproach myself for, in the  
thoughts of my heart.

I could not foresee that its pulses  
would start

Into such strange emotion on seeing  
once more

A woman I left with indifference be-  
fore.

I believed, and with honest convic-  
tion believed,

In my love for Matilda. I never  
conceived

That another could shake it. I  
deemed I had done

With the wild heart of youth, and  
looked hopefully on

To the soberer manhood, the wor-  
thier life,

Which I sought in the love that I  
vowed to my wife.

Poor child! she shall learn the  
whole truth. She shall know

What I knew not myself but a few  
days ago.

The world will console her, — her  
pride will support, —

Her youth will renew its emotions.  
In short,

There is nothing in me that Matilda  
will miss

When once we have parted. 'Tis  
best as it is!"

## VI.

But in vain did he reason and ar-  
gue. Alas!

He yet felt unconvinced that 'twas  
best as it was.

Out of reach of all reason, forever  
would rise

That infantine face of Matilda, with  
eyes

So sad, so reproachful, so cruelly  
kind,

That they harrowed his heart and  
distracted his mind.

## VII.

And then, when he turned from  
these thoughts to Lucile,

Though his heart rose enraptured,  
he could not but feel

A vague sense of awe of her nature.  
Behind

All the beauty of heart, and the  
graces of mind,

Which he saw and revered in her,  
something unknown

And unseen in that nature still  
troubled his own. [prized

He felt that Lucile penetrated and  
Whatever was noblest and best,

though disguised,  
In himself; but he did not feel sure

that he knew,  
Or completely possessed, what, half

hidden from view,  
Remained lofty and lonely in *her*.

Then, her life,  
So untamed, and so free! would

she yield as a wife,  
Independence, long claimed as a

woman? Her name,  
So linked by the world with that

spurious fame  
Which the beauty and wit of a

woman assert,  
In some measure, alas! to her own

loss and hurt  
In the serious thoughts of a man!

. . . This reflection  
O'er the love which he felt cast a

shade of dejection,  
From which he forever escaped to

the thought  
Doubt could reach not. . . "I love

her, and all else is naught!"

## VIII.

His hand trembled strangely in  
breaking the seal

Of the letter which reached him at  
last from Lucile.

At the sight of the very first word  
that he read,

That letter dropped down from his  
hand like the dead

Leaf in autumn, that, falling, leaves  
naked and bare

A desolate tree in a wide wintry air.  
He passed his hand hurriedly over

his eyes, [prise  
Bewildered, incredulous. Angry sur-

And dismay, in one sharp moan,  
broke from him. Anon  
He picked up the page, and read  
rapidly on.

## IX.

*The COMTESSE DE NEVERS to LORD  
ALFRED VARGRAVE.*

“No, Alfred!

“If over the present, when last  
We two met, rose the glamour and  
mist of the past,

It hath now rolled away, and our  
two paths are plain,  
And those two paths divide us.

“That hand which again  
Mine one moment has clasped as  
the hand of a brother,  
That hand and your honor are  
pledged to another!

Forgive, Alfred Vargrave, forgive  
me, if yet

For that moment (now past!) I  
have made you forget

What was due to yourself and that  
other one. Yes,

Mine the fault, and be mine the re-  
pentance! Not less

In now owning this fault, Alfred,  
let me own, too,

I foresaw not the sorrow involved  
in it,

“True,  
That meeting, which hath been so  
fatal, I sought,

I alone! But O, deem not it was  
with the thought

Of your heart to regain, or the past  
to reawaken.

No! believe me, it was with the  
firm and unshaken

Conviction, at least, that our meet-  
ing would be [ly to me

Without peril to *you*, although hap-  
The salvation of all my existence.

“I own,  
When the rumor first reached me,  
which lightly made known

To the world your engagement, my  
heart and my mind

Suffered torture intense. It was  
cruel to find

That so much of the life of my life,  
half unknown

To myself, had been silently set-  
tled on one

Upon whom but to think it would  
soon be a crime.

Then I said to myself, ‘From the  
thralldom which time

Hath not weakened there rests but  
one hope of escape.

That image which Fancy seems ever  
to shape

From the solitude left round the  
ruins of yore

Is a phantom. The Being I loved  
is no more.

What I hear in the silence, and see  
in the lone [of my own

Void of life, is the young hero born  
Perished youth: and his image, se-  
rene and sublime,

In my heart rests unconscious of  
change and of time.

Could I see it but once more, as  
time and as change

Have made it, a thing unfamiliar  
and strange,

See, indeed, that the Being I loved  
in my youth

Is no more, and what rests now is  
only, in truth,

The hard pupil of life and the  
world: then, O, then,

I should wake from a dream, and  
my life be again

Reconciled to the world; and, re-  
leased from regret,

Take the lot fate accords to my  
choice.’

“So we met.  
But the danger I did not foresee has

occurred:  
The danger, alas, to yourself! I

have erred.  
But happy for both that this error

hath been  
Discovered as soon as the danger

was seen!

We meet, Alfred Vargrave, no more.  
 I, indeed,  
 Shall be far from Luchon when this  
 letter you read.  
 My course is decided; my path I  
 discern:  
 Doubt is over; my future is fixed  
 now.

“Return,  
 O return to the young living love!  
 Whence, alas!  
 If, one moment, you wandered,  
 think only it was  
 More deeply to bury the past love.

“And, oh!  
 Believe, Alfred Vargrave, that I,  
 where I go  
 On my far distant pathway through  
 life, shall rejoice [voice  
 To treasure in memory all that your  
 Has avowed to me, all in which  
 others have clothed  
 To my fancy with beauty and worth  
 your betrothed!

In the fair morning light, in the  
 orient dew  
 Of that young life, now yours, can  
 you fail to renew  
 All the noble and pure aspirations,  
 the truth,  
 The freshness, the faith, of your  
 own earnest youth?  
 Yes! *you* will be happy. I, too, in  
 the bliss

I foresee for you, I shall be happy.  
 And this  
 Proves me worthy your friendship.  
 And so — let it prove  
 That I cannot — I do not — respond  
 to your love.

Yes, indeed! be convinced that I  
 could not (no, no,  
 Never, never!) have rendered you  
 happy. And so,  
 Rest assured that, if false to the  
 vows you have plighted,  
 You would have endured, when the  
 first brief, excited  
 Emotion was o'er, not alone the re-  
 morse

Of honor, but also (to render it  
 worse)

Disappointed affection.  
 “Yes, Alfred; you start?  
 But think! if the world was too  
 much in your heart,  
 And too little in mine, when we  
 parted ten years

Ere this last fatal meeting, that  
 time (ay, and tears!)  
 Have but deepened the old demar-  
 cations which then  
 Placed our natures asunder; and  
 we two again,  
 As we then were, would still have  
 been strangely at strife.

In that self-independence which is  
 to my life  
 Its necessity now, as it once was  
 its pride,

Had our course through the world  
 been henceforth side by side,  
 I should have revolted forever, and  
 shocked,

Your respect for the world's plausi-  
 bilities, mocked,  
 Without meaning to do so, and out-  
 raged, all those  
 Social creeds which you live by.

“Oh! do not suppose  
 That I blame you. Perhaps it is  
 you that are right.

Best, then, all as it is!  
 “Deem these words life's Good-  
 night

To the hope of a moment: no more!  
 If there fell  
 Any tear on this page, 'twas a  
 friend's.

“So farewell  
 To the past — and to you, Alfred  
 Vargrave.

“LUCILE.”

X.

So ended that letter.  
 The room seemed to reel  
 Round and round in the mist that  
 was scorching his eyes  
 With a fiery dew. Grief, resent-  
 ment, surprise,

Half choked him; each word he had  
 read, as it smote  
 Down some hope, rose and grasped  
 like a hand at his throat,  
 To stifle and strangle him.

Gasping already  
 For relief from himself, with a foot-  
 step unsteady,  
 He passed from his chamber. He  
 felt both oppressed  
 And excited. The letter he thrust  
 in his breast,  
 And, in search of fresh air and of  
 solitude passed  
 The long lime-trees of Luchon. His  
 footsteps at last  
 Reached a bare narrow heath by the  
 skirts of a wood:  
 It was sombre and silent, and suited  
 his mood.  
 By a mineral spring, long unused,  
 now unknown,  
 Stood a small ruined abbey. He  
 reached it, sat down  
 On a fragment of stone, 'mid the  
 wild weed and thistle,  
 And read over again that perplexing  
 epistle.

## XI.

In re-reading that letter, there rolled  
 from his mind  
 The raw mist of resentment which  
 first made him blind  
 To the pathos breathed through it.  
 Tears rose in his eyes,  
 And a hope sweet and strange in his  
 heart seemed to rise.  
 The truth which he saw not the first  
 time he read  
 That letter, he now saw, — that each  
 word betrayed  
 The love which the writer had sought  
 to conceal.  
 His love was received not, he could  
 not but feel,  
 For one reason alone, — that his love  
 was not free.  
 True! free yet he was not: but could  
 he not be

Free ere long, free as air to revoke  
 that farewell,  
 And to sanction his own hopes? he  
 had but to tell  
 The truth to Matilda, and she were  
 the first  
 To release him: he had but to wait  
 at the worst.  
 Matilda's relations would probably  
 snatch  
 Any pretext, with pleasure, to break  
 off a match  
 In which they had yielded, alone at  
 the whim  
 Of their spoiled child, a languid ap-  
 proval to him.  
 She herself, careless child! was her  
 love for him aught  
 Save the first joyous fancy succeed-  
 ing the thought  
 She last gave to her doll? was she  
 able to feel  
 Such a love as the love he divined in  
 Lucile?  
 He would seek her, obtain his re-  
 lease, and, oh! then,  
 He had but to fly to Lucile, and again  
 Claim the love which his heart would  
 be free to command.  
 But to press on Lucile any claim to  
 her hand,  
 Or even to seek, or to see her, before  
 He could say, "I am free! free, Lu-  
 cile, to implore  
 That great blessing on life you alone  
 can confer,"  
 'Twere dishonor in him, 'twould be  
 insult to her.  
 Thus still with the letter outspread  
 on his knee [ery  
 He followed so fondly his own rev  
 That he felt not the angry regard of  
 a man  
 Fixed upon him; he saw not a face  
 stern and wan  
 Turned towards him; he heard not  
 a footstep that passed  
 And repassed the lone spot where he  
 stood, till at last  
 A hoarse voice aroused him.

He looked up and saw,  
On the bare heath before him, the  
Duc de Luvois.

## XII.

With aggressive ironical tones, and  
a look [the Duke  
of concentrated insolent challenge,  
addressed to Lord Alfred some  
sneering allusion  
to "the doubtless sublime reveries  
his intrusion  
had, he feared, interrupted. Mi-  
lord would do better,  
he fancied, however, to fold up a  
letter  
the writing of which was too well  
known, in fact,  
his remark as he passed to have  
failed to attract."

## XIII.

It was obvious to Alfred the French-  
man was bent  
Upon picking a quarrel! and doubt-  
less 'twas meant  
From him to provoke it by sneers  
such as these.  
A moment sufficed his quick instinct  
to seize  
The position. He felt that he could  
not expose  
His own name, or Lucile's, or Ma-  
tilda's, to those  
idle tongues that would bring down  
upon him the ban  
Of the world, if he now were to fight  
with this man.  
And indeed, when he looked in the  
Duke's haggard face,  
He was pained by the change there  
he could not but trace.  
And he almost felt pity.

He therefore put by  
Each remark from the Duke with  
some careless reply,  
And coldly, but courteously, waving  
away  
The ill-humor the Duke seemed re-  
solved to display,  
Rose, and turned, with a stern salu-  
tation, aside.

## XIV.

Then the Duke put himself in the  
path, made one stride  
In advance, raised a hand, fixed  
upon him his eyes,

And said . . .

"Hold, Lord Alfred! Away with  
disguise!

I will own that I sought you a mo-  
ment ago,

To fix on you a quarrel. I still can  
do so

Upon any excuse. I prefer to be  
frank. [rank

I admit not a rival in fortune or  
To the hand of a woman, whatever  
be hers

Or her suitor's. I love the Comtesse  
de Nevers.

I believed, ere you crossed me, and  
still have the right

To believe, that she would have been  
mine. To her sight

You return, and the woman is sud-  
denly changed.

You step in between us: her heart  
is estranged.

You! who are now betrothed to  
another, I know:

You! whose name with Lucile's  
nearly ten years ago

Was coupled by ties which you  
broke: you! the man

I reproached on the day our ac-  
quaintance began:

You! that left her so lightly,—I can-  
not believe

That you love, as I love, her; nor  
can I conceive

You, indeed have the right so to  
love her.

"Milord

I will not thus tamely concede, at  
your word,

What, a few days ago, I believed to  
be mine!

I shall yet persevere: I shall yet be,  
in fine,

A rival you dare not despise. It is  
plain

That to settle this contest there can  
but remain  
One way — need I say what it is?"

XV.

Not unmoved  
With regretful respect for the earnestness proved  
By the speech he had heard, Alfred  
Vargrave replied  
In words which he trusted might  
yet turn aside  
The quarrel from which he felt  
bound to abstain,  
And, with stately urbanity, strove  
to explain  
To the Duke that he too (a fair  
rival at worst!)  
Had not been accepted.

XVI.

"Accepted! say first  
Are you free to have offered?"

Lord Alfred was mute.

XVII.

"Ah, you dare not reply!" cried  
the Duke. "Why dispute,  
Why palter with me? You are silent!  
and why?  
Because, in your conscience, you  
cannot deny  
'Twas from vanity wanton and  
cruel withal,  
And the wish an ascendancy lost to  
recall,  
That you stepped in between me  
and her. If, milord,  
You be really sincere, I ask only  
one word.  
Say at once you renounce her. At  
once, on my part,  
I will ask your forgiveness with all  
truth of heart,  
And there *can* be no quarrel between  
us. Say on!"  
Lord Alfred grew galled and impatient.  
This tone  
Roused a strong irritation he could  
not repress.  
"You have not the right, sir," he  
said, "and still less

The power, to make terms and conditions  
with me.

I refuse to reply."

XVIII.

As diviners may see  
Fates they cannot avert in some  
figure occult,  
He foresaw in a moment each evil  
result  
Of the quarrel now imminent.

There, face to face,  
'Mid the ruins and tombs of a long-  
perished race,  
With, for witness, the stern Autumn  
Sky overhead,  
And beneath them, unnoticed, the  
graves, and the dead,  
Those two men had met, as it were  
on the ridge [bridge  
Of that perilous, narrow, invisible  
Dividing the Past from the Future,  
so small  
That, if one should pass over, the  
other must fall.

XIX.

On the ear, at that moment, the  
sound of a hoof,  
Urged with speed, sharply smote;  
and from under the roof  
Of the forest in view, where the  
skirts of it verged  
On the heath where they stood, at  
full gallop emerged  
A horseman.

A guide he appeared, by the sash  
Of red silk round the waist, and the  
long leathern lash  
With the short wooden handle,  
slung crosswise behind  
The short jacket; the loose canvas  
trouser, confined  
By the long boots; the woollen  
capote; and the rein,  
A mere hempen cord on a curb.

Up the plain  
He wheeled his horse, white with  
the foam on his flank,  
Leaped the rivulet lightly, turned  
sharp from the bank.



And, approaching the Duke, raised  
his woollen capote,  
Bowed low in the selle, and deliv-  
ered a note.

## XX.

The two stood astonished. The  
Duke, with a gest  
Of apology, turned, stretched his  
hand, and possessed  
Himself of the letter, changed  
color, and tore  
The page open, and read.

Ere a moment was o'er  
His whole aspect changed. A light  
rose to his eyes,  
And a smile to his lips. While with  
startled surprise  
Lord Alfred yet watched him, he  
turned on his heel,  
And said gayly, "A pressing re-  
quest from Lucile!  
You are quite right, Lord Alfred;  
fair rivals at worst,  
Our relative place may perchance  
be reversed.  
You are not accepted — nor free to  
propose!  
I, perchance, am accepted already;  
who knows?  
I had warned you, milord, I should  
still persevere.  
This letter — but stay! you can read  
it — look here!"

## XXI.

It was now Alfred's turn to feel  
roused and enraged.  
But Lucile to himself was not  
pledged or engaged  
By aught that could sanction re-  
sentment. He said  
Not a word, but turned round, took  
the letter, and read . . .

*The COMTESSE DE NEVERS to the  
DUC DE LUVOIS.*

"SAINT SAVIOUR.

"Your letter, which followed me  
here, makes me stay  
Till I see you again. With no mo-  
ment's delay

I entreat, I conjure you, by all that  
you feel  
Or profess, to come to me directly.  
"LUCILE."

## XXII.

"Your letter." He then had been  
writing to her!  
Coldly shrugging his shoulders,  
Lord Alfred said, "Sir,  
Do not let me detain you!"  
'The Duke smiled and bowed;  
Placed the note in his bosom; ad-  
dressed, half aloud,  
A few words to the messenger: . . .  
"Say your despatch  
Will be answered ere nightfall;"  
then glanced at his watch,  
And turned back to the Baths.

## XXIII.

Alfred Vargrave stood still,  
Torn, distracted in heart, and di-  
vided in will. [to him.  
He turned to Lucile's farewell letter  
And read over her words; rising  
tears made them dim;  
"Doubt is over: my future is fixed  
now," they said,  
"My course is decided." Her course?  
what! to wed  
With this insolent rival! With  
that thought there shot  
Through his heart an acute jealous  
anguish. But not  
Even thus could his clear worldly  
sense quite excuse  
Those strange words to the Duke  
She was free to refuse  
Himself, free the Duke to accept,  
it was true:  
Even then, though, this eager and  
strange rendezvous  
How imprudent! To some unfre-  
quented lone inn,  
And so late (for the night was  
about to begin) —  
She, companionless there! — had  
she bidden that man?  
A fear, vague, and formless, and  
horrible, ran  
Through his heart.

## XXIV.

At that moment he looked up, and saw,  
 Riding fast through the forest, the  
 Duc de Luvois,  
 Who waved his hand to him, and  
 sped out of sight.  
 The day was descending. He felt  
 'twould be night  
 Ere the man reached Saint Saviour.

## XXV.

He walked on, but not  
 Back toward Luchon : he walked on,  
 but knew not in what  
 Direction, nor yet with what object,  
 indeed,  
 He was walking ; but still he walked  
 on without heed.

## XXVI.

The day had been sullen ; but,  
 towards his decline,  
 The sun sent a stream of wild light  
 up the pine.  
 Darkly denting the red light re-  
 vealed at his back,  
 The old ruined abbey rose roofless  
 and black.  
 The spring that yet oozed through  
 the moss-paven floor  
 Had suggested, no doubt, to the  
 monks there, of yore,  
 The site of that refuge where, back  
 to its God  
 How many a heart, now at rest  
 'neath the sod,  
 Had borne from the world all the  
 same wild unrest  
 That now preyed on his own !

## XXVII.

By the thoughts in his breast  
 With varying impulse divided and  
 torn,  
 He traversed the scant heath, and  
 reached the forlorn  
 Autumn woodland, in which but a  
 short while ago  
 He had seen the Duke rapidly enter ;  
 and so

He too entered. The light waned  
 around him, and passed  
 Into darkness. The wrathful, red  
 Occident cast [hind-  
 One glare of vindictive inquiry be-  
 As the last light of day from the  
 high wood declined,  
 And the great forest sighed its fare-  
 well to the beam,  
 And far off on the stillness the  
 voice of the stream  
 Fell faintly.

## XXVIII.

O Nature, how fair is thy face,  
 And how light is thy heart, and how  
 friendless thy grace !  
 Thou false mistress of man ! thou  
 dost sport with him lightly  
 In his hours of ease and enjoyment ;  
 and brightly  
 Dost thou smile to his smile ; to his  
 joys thou inclinest,  
 But his sorrows, thou knowest them  
 not, nor divinest.  
 While he woos, thou art wanton ;  
 thou lettest him love thee ;  
 But thou art not his friend, for his  
 grief cannot move thee ;  
 And at last, when he sickens and  
 dies, what dost thou ?  
 All as gay are thy garments, as care-  
 less thy brow,  
 And thou laughest and toyest with  
 any new comer,  
 Not a tear more for winter, a smile  
 less for summer !  
 Hast thou never an anguish to heave  
 the heart under  
 That fair breast of thine, O thou  
 feminine wonder !  
 For all those — the young, and the  
 fair, and the strong,  
 Who have loved thee, and lived with  
 thee gayly and long,  
 And who now on thy bosom lie  
 dead ? and their deeds  
 And their days are forgotten ! O,  
 hast thou no weeds  
 And not one year of mourning, —  
 one out of the many

That deck thy new bridals forever,—  
 nor any  
 regrets for thy lost loves, concealed  
 from the new,  
 O thou widow of earth's genera-  
 tions? Go to!  
 If the sea and the night wind know  
 aught of these things,  
 They do not reveal it. We are not  
 thy kings.

◆

CANTO VI.

I.

“ THE huntsman has ridden too far  
 on the chase,  
 And eldrich, and eerie, and strange  
 is the place! [gone by.  
 The castle betokens a date long  
 He crosses the court-yard, with  
 curious eye:  
 He wanders from chamber to cham-  
 ber, and yet  
 From strangeness to strangeness  
 his footsteps are set;  
 And the whole place grows wilder  
 and wilder, and less  
 Like aught seen before. Each in  
 obsolete dress,  
 Strange portraits regard him with  
 looks of surprise,  
 Strange forms from the arras start  
 forth to his eyes;  
 Strange epigraphs, blazoned, burn  
 out of the wall:  
 The spell of a wizard is over it all.  
 In her chamber enchanted, the  
 Princess is sleeping  
 The sleep which for centuries she  
 has been keeping.  
 If she smile in her sleep, it must be  
 to some lover  
 Whose lost golden locks the long  
 grasses now cover:  
 If she moan in her dream, it must  
 be to deplore  
 Some grief which the world cares  
 to hear of no more.  
 But how fair is her forehead, how  
 calm seems her cheek!

And how sweet must that voice be,  
 if once she would speak.  
 He looks and he loves her; but  
 knows he (not he!) [tery?  
 The clew to unravel this old mys-  
 And he stoops to those shut lips.  
 The shapes on the wall,  
 The mute men in armor around him  
 and all  
 The weird figures frown, as though  
 striving to say,  
 ‘Halt! invade not the Past, reckless  
 child of To-day!  
 And give not, O madman! the heart  
 in thy breast  
 To a phantom, the soul of whose  
 sense is possessed  
 By an Age not thine own!’  
 “But unconscious is he,  
 And he heeds not the warning, he  
 cares not to see  
 Aught but *one* form before him!  
 “Rash, wild words are o’er  
 And the vision is vanished from  
 sight evermore!  
 And the gray morning sees, as it  
 drearily moves  
 O’er a land long deserted, a mad-  
 man that roves  
 Through a ruin and seeks to recap-  
 ture a dream.  
 Lost to life and its uses, withdrawn  
 from the scheme  
 Of man’s waking existence, he wan-  
 ders apart.”  
 And this is an old fairy-tale of the  
 heart.  
 It is told in all lands, in a different  
 tongue;  
 Told with tears by the old, heard  
 with smiles by the young.  
 And the tale to each heart unto  
 which it is known  
 Has a different sense. It has puz-  
 zled my own.

II.

Eugène de Luvois was a man who,  
 in part  
 From strong physical health, and  
 that vigor of heart

Which physical health gives, and  
 partly, perchance,  
 From a generous vanity native to  
 France,  
 With the heart of a hunter, what-  
 ever the quarry, [tarry  
 Pursued it, too hotly impatient to  
 Or turn, till he took it. His trophies  
 were trifles :  
 But trifler he was not. When rose-  
 leaves it rifles,  
 No less than when oak-trees it  
 ruins, the wind  
 Its pleasure pursues with impetu-  
 ous mind.  
 Both Eugène de Luvois and Lord  
 Alfred had been  
 Men of pleasure: but men's pleas-  
 ant vices, which, seen  
 Floating faint, in the sunshine of  
 Alfred's soft mood,  
 Seemed amiable foibles, by Luvois  
 pursued  
 With impetuous passion, seemed  
 semi-Satanic.  
 Half pleased you see brooks play  
 with pebbles; in panic  
 You watch them whirled down by  
 the torrent.

In truth,  
 To the sacred political creed of his  
 youth [denied  
 The century which he was born to  
 All realization. Its generous pride  
 To degenerate protest on all things  
 was sunk;  
 Its principles each to a prejudice  
 shrunk.  
 Down the path of a life that led  
 nowhere he trod,  
 Where his whims were his guides,  
 and his will was his god,  
 And his pastime his purpose.

From boyhood possessed  
 Of inherited wealth, he had learned  
 to invest  
 Both his wealth and those passions  
 wealth frees from the cage  
 Which penury locks, in each vice of  
 an age.

All the virtues of which, by the  
 creed he revered,  
 Were to him illegitimate.

Thus, he appeared  
 To the world what the world chose  
 to have him appear, —  
 The frivolous tyrant of Fashion, a  
 mere  
 Reformer in coats, cards, and car-  
 riages! Still  
 'Twas this vigor of nature, and ten-  
 sion of will,  
 That found for the first time — per-  
 chance for the last —  
 In Lucile what they lacked yet to  
 free from the Past,  
 Force, and faith, in the Future.

And so, in his mind,  
 To the anguish of losing the woman  
 was joined [tination,  
 The terror of missing his life's des-  
 tination,  
 Which in her had its mystical rep-  
 resentation.

### III.

And truly, the thought of it, scaring  
 him, passed  
 O'er his heart, while he now through  
 the twilight rode fast.  
 As a shade from the wing of some  
 great bird obscene  
 In a wild silent land may be sud-  
 denly seen,  
 Darkening over the sands, where it  
 startles and scares  
 Some traveller strayed in the waste  
 unawares,  
 So that thought more than once  
 darkened over his heart  
 For a moment, and rapidly seemed  
 to depart.  
 Fast and furious he rode through  
 the thickets which rose  
 Up the shaggy hillside; and the  
 quarrelling crows  
 Clanged above him, and clustering  
 down the dim air  
 Dropped into the dark woods. By  
 fits here and there  
 Shepherd fires faintly gleamed from  
 the valleys. O how

He envied the wings of each wild  
bird, as now [ascent  
He urged the steed over the dizzy  
Of the mountains! Behind him a  
murmur was sent  
From the torrent, — Before him a  
sound from the tracts  
Of the woodlands that waved o'er  
the wild cataracts,  
And the loose earth and loose stones  
rolled momentarily down  
From the hoofs of his steed to  
abysses unknown.

The red day had fallen beneath the  
black woods,  
And the Powers of the night through  
the vast solitudes  
Walked abroad and conversed with  
each other. The trees  
Were in sound and in motion, and  
muttered like seas  
In Elfland. The road through the  
forest was hollowed.  
On he sped through the darkness,  
as though he were followed  
Fast, fast by the Erl king!

The wild wizard-work  
Of the forest at last opened sharp,  
o'er the fork  
Of a savage ravine, and behind the  
black stems  
Of the last trees, whose leaves in  
the light gleamed like gems,  
Broke the broad moon above the  
voluminous [Tartarus!  
Rock-chaos, — the Hecate of that  
With his horse reeking white, he  
at last reached the door  
Of a small mountain inn, on the  
brow of a hoar

Craggy promontory, o'er a fissure  
as grim,  
Through which, ever roaring, there  
leaped o'er the limb  
Of the rent rock a torrent of water,  
from sight,  
Into pools that were feeding the  
roots of the night.

A balcony hung o'er the water.  
Above

In a glimmering casement a shade  
seemed to move.  
At the door the old negress was  
nodding her head  
As he reached it. "My mistress  
awaits you," she said.  
And up the rude stairway of creak-  
ing pine rafter  
He followed her silent. A few mo-  
ments after,  
His heart almost stunned him, his  
head seemed to reel,  
For a door closed — Luvois was  
alone with Lucile.

## IV.

In a gray travelling dress, her dark  
hair unconfined  
Streaming o'er it, and tossed now  
and then by the wind  
From the lattice, that waved the  
dull flame in a spire  
From a brass lamp before her, — a  
faint hectic fire  
On her cheek, to her eyes lent the  
lustre of fever.  
They seemed to have wept them-  
selves wider than ever,  
Those dark eyes, — so dark and so  
deep!

"You relent?  
And your plans have been changed  
by the letter I sent?"  
There his voice sank, borne down  
by a strong inward strife.

## LUCILE.

Your letter! yes, Duke. For it  
threatens man's life, —  
Woman's honor.

## LUVUOIS.

The last, madam, *not!*

## LUCILE.

Both. I glance  
At your own words; blush, son of  
the knighthood of France,  
As I read them! You say in *this*  
letter . . .

"I know,

*Why now you refuse me; 'tis (is it not so?)*

*For the man who has trifled before, wantonly,*

*And now trifles again with the heart you deny*

*To myself. But he shall not! By man's last wild law,*

*I will seize on the right (the right, Duc de Luvois!)*

*To avenge for you, woman, the past, and to give*

*To the future its freedom. That man shall not live*

*To make you as wretched as you have made me!"*

LUVOIS.

Well, madam, in those words what word do you see

That threatens the honor of woman?

LUCILE.

See! . . . what, What word, do you ask? Every word! would you not,

Had I taken your hand thus, have felt that your name

Was soiled and dishonored by more than mere shame

If the woman that bore it had first been the cause

Of the crime which in these words is menaced? You pause!

Woman's honor, you ask? Is there, sir, no dishonor

In the smile of a woman, when men, gazing on her,

Can shudder, and say, "In that smile is a grave?"

No! you can have no cause, Duke, for no right you have

In the contest you menace. That contest but draws

Every right into ruin. By all human laws

Of man's heart I forbid it, by all sanctities

Of man's social honor!

The Duke drooped his eyes. "I obey you," he said, "but let woman beware

How she plays fast and loose thus with human despair,

And the storm in man's heart. Madam, yours was the right,

When you saw that I hoped, to extinguish hope quite,

But you should from the first have done this, for I feel

That you knew from the first that I loved you."

Lucile

This sudden reproach seemed to startle.

She raised

A slow, wistful regard to his features, and gazed

On them silent awhile. His own looks were downcast

Through her heart, whence its first wild alarm was now passed,

Pity crept, and perchance o'er her conscience a tear,

Falling softly, awoke it. However severe,

Were they unjust, these sudden upbraidings, to her?

Had she lightly misconstrued this man's character,

Which had seemed, even when most impassioned it seemed,

Too self-conscious to lose all in love? Had she deemed

That this airy, gay, insolent man of the world,

So proud of the place the world gave him, held furled

In his bosom no passion which once shaken wide [lofty pride?

Might tug, till it snapped, that erect Were those elements in him, which

once roused to strife, Overthrow a whole nature, and change a whole life?

There are two kinds of strength. One, the strength of the river

Which through continents pushes its pathway forever

To fling its fond heart in the sea; if it lose [its use.

This, the aim of its life, it is lost to

It goes mad, is diffused into deluge,  
and dies.  
The other, the strength of the sea;  
which supplies  
Its deep life from mysterious sources,  
and draws  
The river's life into its own life, by  
laws  
Which it heeds not. The difference  
in each case is this:  
The river is lost, if the ocean it  
miss;  
If the sea miss the river, what mat-  
ter? The sea  
Is the sea still, forever. Its deep  
heart will be  
Self-sufficing, unconscious of loss  
as of yore;  
Its sources are infinite; still to the  
shore, [say,  
With no diminution of pride, it will  
"I am here; I, the sea! stand aside,  
and make way!"  
Was his love, then, the love of the  
river? and she,  
Had she taken that love for the love  
of the sea?

## v.

At that thought, from her aspect  
whatever had been  
Stern or haughty departed; and,  
humbled in mien,  
She approached him, and brokenly  
murmured, as though  
To herself more than him, "Was I  
wrong? is it so?  
Hear me, Duke! you must feel that,  
whatever you deem  
Your right to reproach me in this,  
your esteem  
I may claim on *one* ground, — I at  
least am sincere.  
You say that to me from the first it  
was clear  
That you loved me. But what if  
this knowledge were known  
At a moment in life when I felt  
most alone,  
And least able to be so? A moment,  
in fact,

When I strove from one haunting  
regret to retract  
And emancipate life, and once more  
to fulfil  
Woman's destinies, duties, and  
hopes? would you still  
So bitterly blame me, Eugène de  
Luvois,  
If I hoped to see all this, or deemed  
that I saw  
For a moment the promise of this,  
in the plighted  
Affection of one who, in nature,  
united  
So much that from others affection  
might claim  
If only affection were free? Do  
you blame  
The hope of that moment? I  
deemed my heart free  
From all, saving sorrow. I deemed  
that in me  
There was yet strength to mould it  
once more to my will,  
To uplift it once more to my hope.  
Do you still  
Blame me, Duke, that I did not then  
bid you refrain  
From hope? alas! I too then  
hoped!"

LUVUOIS.

O, again,  
Yet again, say that thrice-blesséd  
word! say, Lucile,  
That you then deigned to hope —

LUCILE.

Yes! to hope I could feel,  
And could give to you, that without  
which, all else given  
Were but to deceive, and to injure  
you even: —  
A heart free from thoughts of  
another. Say, then,  
Do you blame that one hope?

LUVUOIS.

O Lucile!

"Say again,"

She resumed, gazing down, and  
with faltering tone,

"Do you blame me that, when I at  
last had to own  
To my heart that the hope it had  
cherished was o'er,  
And forever, I said to you then,  
'Hope no more?'  
I myself hoped no more!"

With but ill-suppressed wrath  
The Duke answered . . . "What,  
then! he recrosses your path  
This man, and you have but to see  
him, despite  
Of his troth to another, to take  
back that light  
Worthless heart to your own, which  
he wronged years ago!"

Lucile faintly, brokenly murmured,  
. . . "No! no!  
'Tis not that—but alas!—but I  
cannot conceal  
That I have not forgotten the past  
—but I feel [on your part,—  
That I cannot accept all these gifts  
In return for what . . . ah, Duke,  
what is it? . . . a heart  
Which is only a ruin!"

With words warm and wild,  
"Though a ruin it be, trust me yet  
to rebuild  
And restore it," Luvois cried;  
"though ruined it be,  
Since so dear is that ruin, ah, yield  
it to me!"

He approached her. She shrank  
back. The grief in her eyes  
Answered, "No!" [rise  
An emotion more fierce seemed to  
And to break into flame, as though  
fired by the light  
Of that look, in his heart. He ex-  
claimed, "Am I right?  
You reject *me!* accept *him?*"

"I have not done so,"  
She said firmly. He hoarsely re-  
sumed, "Not yet, — no!  
But can you with accents as firm  
promise me  
That you will not accept him?"

"Accept? Is he free?  
Free to offer?" she said.

"You evade me, Lucile,"  
He replied; ah, you will not avow  
what you feel!

He might make himself free? O,  
you blush, — turn away!  
Dare you openly look in my face,  
lady, say!

While you deign to reply to one  
question from me?

I may hope not, you tell me: but  
tell me, may he?

What! silent? I alter my ques-  
tion. If quite

Freed in faith from this troth, might  
he hope then?"

"He might,"  
She said softly.

## VI.

Those two whispered words, in  
his breast,

As he heard them, in one madden-  
ing moment releast

All that's evil and fierce in man's  
nature, to crush

And extinguish in man all that's  
good. In the rush

Of wild jealousy, all the fierce pas-  
sions that waste

And darken and devastate intellect,  
chased [wild animal

From its realm human reason. The  
In the bosom of man was set free.

And of all  
Human passions the fiercest, fierce

jealousy, fierce  
As the fire, and more wild than the

whirlwind, to pierce  
And to rend, rushed upon him;

fierce jealousy, swelled  
By all passions bred from it, and

ever impelled  
To involve all things else in the

anguish within it,  
And on others inflict its own pangs!

At that minute  
What passed through his mind, who

shall say? who may tell  
The dark thoughts of man's heart,

which the red glare of hell  
Can illumine alone?



He stared wildly around  
 That lone place, so lonely! That si-  
 lence! no sound  
 Reached that room, through the dark  
 evening air, save the drear  
 Drip and roar of the cataract cease-  
 less and near!  
 It was midnight all round on the  
 weird silent weather;  
 Deep midnight in him! They two,  
 — lone and together,  
 Himself, and that woman defence-  
 less before him!  
 The triumph and bliss of his rival  
 flashed o'er him.  
 The abyss of his own black despair  
 seemed to ope  
 At his feet, with that awful exclu-  
 sion of hope  
 Which Dante read over the city of  
 doom.  
 All the Tarquin passed into his soul  
 in the gloom,  
 And, uttering words he dared never  
 recall,  
 Words of insult and menace, he  
 thundered down all  
 The brewed storm-cloud within him:  
 its flashes scorched blind  
 His own senses. His spirit was  
 driven on the wind  
 Of a reckless emotion beyond his  
 control;  
 A torrent seemed loosened within  
 him. His soul  
 Surged up from that caldron of  
 passion that hissed  
 And seethed in his heart.

## VII.

He had thrown, and had missed  
 His last stake.

## VIII.

For, transfigured, she rose from  
 the place  
 Where he rested o'erawed: a saint's  
 scorn on her face;  
 Such a dread *vade retro* was written  
 in light  
 On her forehead, the fiend would  
 himself, at that sight,

Have sunk back abashed to perdi-  
 tion. I know  
 If Lucretia at Tarquin but once had  
 looked so,  
 She had needed no dagger next  
 morning.

She rose  
 And swept to the floor, like that  
 phantom the snows  
 Feel at nightfall sweep o'er them,  
 when daylight is gone,  
 And Caucasus is with the moon all  
 alone.  
 There she paused; and, as though  
 from immeasurable,  
 Insurpassable distance, she mur-  
 mured —

“Farewell!  
 We, alas! have mistaken each other.  
 Once more [o'er.  
 Illusion, to-night, in my lifetime is  
 Duc de Luvois, adieu!”  
 From the heart-breaking gloom  
 Of that vacant, reproachful, and  
 desolate room,

He felt she was gone, — gone forever!

## IX.

No word,  
 The sharpest that ever was edged  
 by a sword,  
 Could have pierced to his heart  
 with such keen accusation  
 As the silence, the sudden profound  
 isolation,  
 In which he remained.

“O, return; I repent!”  
 He exclaimed; but no sound through  
 the stillness was sent,  
 Save the roar of the water, in an-  
 swer to him,  
 And the beetle that, sleeping, yet  
 hummed her night-hymn:  
 An indistinct anthem, that troubled  
 the air  
 With a searching, and wistful, and  
 questioning prayer.  
 “Return,” sung the wandering in-  
 sect. The roar  
 Of the waters replied, “Never-  
 more! nevermore!”

He walked to the window. The  
 spray on his brow  
 Was flung cold from the whirlpools  
 of water below;  
 The frail wooden balcony shook in  
 the sound  
 Of the torrent. The mountains  
 gloomed sullenly round.  
 A candle one ray from a closed  
 casement flung.  
 O'er the dim balustrade all bewil-  
 dered he hung,  
 Vaguely watching the broken and  
 shimmering blink  
 Of the stars on the veering and  
 vitreous brink  
 Of that snake-like prone column  
 of water; and listing  
 Aloof o'er the languors of air the  
 persisting  
 Sharp horn of the gray goat. Be-  
 fore he relinquished  
 His unconscious employment, that  
 light was extinguished.  
 Wheels, at last, from the inn door  
 aroused him. He ran  
 Down the stairs; reached the door  
 — just to see her depart.  
 Down the mountain the carriage  
 was speeding.

x.

His heart

Pealed the knell of its last hope.  
 He rushed on; but whither  
 He knew not—on, into the dark  
 cloudy weather—  
 The midnight—the mountains—  
 on, over the shelf  
 Of the precipice—on, still—away  
 from himself!  
 Till, exhausted, he sank 'mid the  
 dead leaves and moss  
 At the mouth of the forest. A  
 glimmering cross  
 Of gray stone stood for prayer by  
 the woodside. He sank  
 Prayerless, powerless, down at its  
 base, 'mid the dank  
 Weeds and grasses; his face hid  
 amongst them. He knew

That the night had divided his whole  
 life in two.  
 Behind him a Past that was over-  
 forever; [deavor  
 Before him a Future devoid of en-  
 And purpose. He felt a remorse  
 for the one,  
 Of the other a fear. What remained  
 to be done?  
 Whither now should he turn? Turn  
 again, as before,  
 To his old easy, careless existence  
 of yore [ter or worse  
 He could not. He felt that for bet-  
 A change had passed o'er him; an  
 angry remorse  
 Of his own frantic failure and error  
 had marred  
 Such a refuge forever. The future  
 seemed barred  
 By the corpse of a dead hope o'er  
 which he must tread  
 To attain it. Life's wilderness round  
 him was spread.  
 What clew there to cling by?  
 He clung by a name  
 To a dynasty fallen forever. He came  
 Of an old princely house, true  
 through change to the race  
 And the sword of Saint Louis,—a  
 faith 'twere disgrace  
 To relinquish, and folly to live for.  
 Nor less  
 Was his ancient religion (once  
 potent to bless  
 Or to ban; and the crozier his ances-  
 tors kneeled  
 To adore, when they fought for the  
 Cross, in hard field,  
 With the Crescent) become ere it  
 reached him, tradition;  
 A mere faded badge of a social posi-  
 tion; [about,  
 A thing to retain and say nothing  
 Lest, if used, it should draw degra-  
 dation from doubt.  
 Thus, the first time he sought them,  
 the creeds of his youth  
 Wholly failed the strong needs of his  
 manhood, in truth!

And beyond them, what region of  
 refuge? what field  
 For employment, this civilized age,  
 did it yield,  
 In that civilized land? or to thought?  
 or to action?  
 Blind deliriums, bewildered and end-  
 less distraction!  
 Not even a desert, not even the cell  
 Of a hermit to flee to, wherein he  
 might quell  
 The wild devil-instincts which now,  
 unrepres't,  
 Run riot through that ruined world  
 in his breast.

## XI.

So he lay there, like Lucifer, fresh  
 from the sight  
 Of a heaven scaled and lost; in the  
 wide arms of night  
 O'er the howling abysses of noth-  
 ingness! There  
 As he lay, Nature's deep voice was  
 teaching him prayer;  
 But what had he to pray to?

The winds in the woods,  
 The voices abroad o'er those vast  
 solitudes,  
 Were in commune all round with  
 the invisible Power  
 That walked the dim world by Him-  
 self at that hour.

But their language he had not yet  
 learned — in despite  
 Of the much he *had* learned — or  
 forgotten it quite,  
 With its once native accents. Alas!  
 what had he

To add to that deep-toned sublime  
 symphony [was still  
 Of thanksgiving? . . . A fiery-finger  
 Scorching into his heart some dread  
 sentence. His will,  
 Like a wind that is put to no pur-  
 pose, was wild  
 At its work of destruction within  
 him. The child  
 Of an infidel age, he had been his  
 own god,  
 His own devil.

He sat on the damp mountain sod,  
 And stared sullenly up at the dark  
 sky.

The clouds  
 Had heaped themselves over the  
 bare west in crowds  
 Of misshapen, incongruous por-  
 tents. A green  
 Streak of dreary, cold, luminous  
 ether, between  
 The base of their black barricades,  
 and the ridge  
 Of the grim world, gleamed ghastly,  
 as under some bridge,  
 Cyclop-sized, in a city of ruins o'er-  
 thrown

By sieges forgotten, some river,  
 unknown

And unnamed, widens on into deso-  
 late lands

While he gazed, that cloud-city in-  
 visible hands

Dismantled and rent; and revealed,  
 through a loop

In the breached dark, the blemished  
 and half-broken hoop

Of the moon, which soon silently  
 sank; and anon [gone.

The whole supernatural pageant was  
 The wide night, discomfited, con-  
 scious of loss,

Darkened round him. One object  
 alone — that gray cross —

Glimmered faint on the dark. Gaz-  
 ing up, he descried

Through the void air, its desolate  
 arms outstretched wide,

As though to embrace him.

He turned from the sight,  
 Set his face to the darkness, and fled.

## XII.

When the light  
 Of the dawn grayly flickered and  
 glared on the spent

Wearied ends of the night, like a  
 hope that is sent

To the need of some grief when its  
 need is the sorest,

He was sullenly riding across the  
 dark forest

Towards Luchon.

Thus riding, with eyes of defiance  
Set against the young day, as dis-  
claiming alliance  
With aught that the day brings to  
man, he perceived  
Faintly, suddenly, fleetingly, through  
the damp-leaved  
Autumn branches that put forth  
gaunt arms on his way,  
The face of a man pale and wistful,  
and gray  
With the gray glare of morning.  
Eugène de Luvois,  
With the sense of a strange second  
sight, when he saw  
That phantom-like face, could at  
once recognize,  
By the sole instinct now left to  
guide him, the eyes  
Of his rival, though fleeting the  
vision and dim,  
With a stern sad inquiry fixed keenly  
on him. [to his own;  
And, to meet it, a lie leaped at once  
A lie born of that lying darkness  
now grown  
Over all in his nature! He answered  
that gaze  
With a look which, if ever a man's  
look conveys  
More intensely than words what a  
man means, conveyed  
Beyond doubt in its smile an an-  
nouncement which said,  
"I have triumphed. The question  
your eyes would imply  
Comes too late, Alfred Vargrave!"  
And so he rode by,  
And rode on, and rode gayly, and  
rode out of sight,  
Leaving that look behind him to  
rankle and bite.

XIII.

And it bit, and it rankled.

XIV.

Lord Alfred, scarce knowing,  
Or choosing, or heeding the way he  
was going,

By one wild hope impelled, by one  
wild fear pursued,  
And led by one instinct, which seem-  
ed to exclude  
From his mind every human sensa-  
tion, save one—  
The torture of doubt — had strayed  
moodily on,  
Down the highway deserted, that  
evening in which  
With the Duke he had parted;  
strayed on, through the rich  
Haze of sunset, or into the gradual  
night,  
Which darkened, unnoticed, the  
land from his sight,  
Toward Saint Saviour; nor did the  
changed aspect of all  
The wild scenery round him avail  
to recall (tions, until,  
To his senses their normal percep-  
As he stood on the black shaggy  
brow of the hill  
At the mouth of the forest, the  
moon, which had hung  
Two dark hours in a cloud, slipped  
on fire from among  
The rent vapors, and sunk o'er the  
ridge of the world.  
Then he lifted his eyes, and saw  
round him unfurled,  
In one moment of splendor, the  
leagues of dark trees,  
And the long rocky line of the wild  
Pyrenees.  
And he knew by the milestone  
scored rough on the face  
Of the bare rock, he was but two  
hours from the place  
Where Lucile and Luvois must have  
met. This same track  
The Duke must have traversed, per-  
force, to get back  
To Luchon; not yet then the Duke  
had returned!  
He listened, he looked up the dark,  
but discerned [by the way.  
Not a trace, not a sound of a horse  
He knew that the night was ap-  
proaching to day.

He resolved to proceed to Saint Saviour. The morn  
Which, at last, through the forest  
broke chill and forlorn,  
Revealed to him, riding toward Luchon, the Duke.  
'Twas then that the two men exchanged look for look.

xv.

And the Duke's rankled in him.

xvi.

He rushed on. He tore  
His path through the thicket. He  
reached the inn door,  
Roused the yet drowsing porter, reluctant to rise,  
And inquired for the Countess. The man rubbed his eyes.  
The Countess was gone. And the Duke?

The man stared  
A sleepy inquiry.

With accents that scared  
The man's dull sense awake, "He, the stranger," he cried,  
"Who had been there that night!"  
The man grinned and replied,  
With a vacant intelligence, "He, O ay, ay!"  
He went after the lady."

No further reply  
Could he give. Alfred Vargrave demanded no more,

Flung a coin to the man, and so turned from the door.

"What! the Duke then the night in that lone inn had passed?

In that lone inn — with her!" Was that look he had cast

When they met in the forest, that look which remained

On his mind with its terrible smile, thus explained?

xvii.

The day was half turned to the evening, before [sick and sore.  
He re-entered Luchon, with a heart  
In the midst of a light crowd of babblers, his look,

By their voices attracted, distinguished the Duke,

Gay, insolent, noisy, with eyes sparkling bright, [ous.

With laughter, shrill, airy, continuing  
Right

Through the throng Alfred Vargrave, with swift sombre

stride,  
Glided on. The Duke noticed him, turned, stepped aside,

And, cordially grasping his hand, whispered low,

"O, how right have you been!  
There can never be — no,

Never — any more contest between us! Milord,

Let us henceforth be friends!"

Having uttered that word,  
He turned lightly round on his heel, and again

His gay laughter was heard, echoed loud by that train

Of his young imitators.

Lord Alfred stood still,  
Rooted, stunned to the spot. He felt weary and ill,

Out of heart with his own heart, and sick to the soul,

With a dull, stifling anguish he could not control.

Does he hear in a dream, through the buzz of the crowd,

The Duke's blithe associates, babbling aloud [that day?

Some comment upon his gay humor  
He never was gayer: what makes him so gay?

'Tis, no doubt, say the flatterers, flattering in tune,

Some vestal whose virtue no tongue dare impugn

Has at last found a Mars, — who, of course, shall be nameless.

The vestal that yields to Mars *only* is blameless!

Hark! hears he a name which thus syllabled, stirs

All his heart into tumult? . . . Lucile de Nevers

With the Duke's coupled gayly, in  
 some laughing, light,  
 Free allusion? Not so as might  
 give him the right  
 To turn fiercely round on the  
 speaker, but yet  
 To a trite and irreverent compli-  
 ment set!

## XVIII.

Slowly, slowly, usurping that place  
 In his soul  
 Where the thought of Lucile was  
 enshrined, did there roll  
 Back again, back again, on its  
 smooth downward course  
 O'er his nature, with gathered mo-  
 mentum and force,  
 THE WORLD.

## XIX.

"No!" he muttered, "she cannot  
 have sinned!  
 True! women there are (self-named  
 women of mind!)  
 Who love rather liberty — liberty,  
 yes!  
 To choose and to leave — than the  
 legalized stress  
 Of the lovingest marriage. But she  
 — is she so?  
 I will not believe it. Lucile? O no,  
 no!  
 Not Lucile!  
 "But the world? and, ah, what  
 would it say?  
 O the look of that man, and his  
 laughter, to-day!  
 The gossip's light question! the  
 slanderous jest!  
 She is right! no, we could not be  
 happy. 'Tis best  
 As it is. I will write to her, — write,  
 O my heart!  
 And accept her farewell. *Our* fare-  
 well! must we part, —  
 Part thus, then, — forever, Lucile?  
 Is it so?  
 Yes! I feel it. We could not be  
 happy, I know.  
 'Twas a dream! we must waken!"

## XX.

With head bowed, as though  
 By the weight of the heart's resig-  
 nation, and slow  
 Moody footsteps, he turned to his  
 inn.

Drawn apart

From the gate, in the court-yard,  
 and ready to start,  
 Postboys mounted, portmanteaus  
 packed up and made fast,  
 A travelling-carriage, unnoticed, he  
 passed.  
 He ordered his horse to be ready  
 anon:  
 Sent, and paid, for the reckoning,  
 and slowly passed on,  
 And ascended the staircase, and  
 entered his room.  
 It was twilight. The chamber was  
 dark in the gloom  
 Of the evening. He listlessly kin-  
 dled a light  
 On the mantel-piece; there a large  
 card caught his sight, —  
 A large card, a stout card, well  
 printed and plain,  
 Nothing flourishing, flimsy, affected,  
 or vain.  
 It gave a respectable look to the slab  
 That it lay on. The name was —

SIR RIDLEY MACNAB.

Full familiar to him was the name  
 that he saw,  
 For 'twas that of his own future  
 uncle-in-law,  
 Mrs. Darcy's rich brother, the  
 banker, well-known  
 As wearing the longest-phyacteried  
 gown  
 Of all the rich Pharisees England  
 can boast of;  
 A shrewd Puritan Scot, whose sharp  
 wits made the most of

This world and the next; having  
 largely invested  
 Not only where treasure is never  
 molested  
 By thieves, moth, or rust; but on  
 this earthly ball  
 Where interest was high, and se-  
 curity small,  
 Of mankind there was never a  
 theory yet  
 Not by some iudividual instance  
 upset:  
 And so to that sorrowful verse of  
 the Psalm  
 Which declares that the wicked ex-  
 panded like the palm  
 In a world where the righteous are  
 stunted and pent,  
 A cheering exception did Ridley  
 present.  
 Like the worthy of Uz, Heaven  
 prospered his piety.  
 The leader of every religious society,  
 Christian knowledge he labored  
 through life to promote  
 With personal profit, and knew  
 how to quote  
 Both the Stocks and the Scripture,  
 with equal advantage  
 To himself and admiring friends,  
 in this Cant-Age.

## XXI.

Whilst over this card Alfred va-  
 cantly brooded,  
 A waiter his head through the door-  
 way protruded;  
 "Sir Ridley MacNab with Milord  
 wished to speak."  
 Alfred Vargrave could feel there  
 were tears on his cheek;  
 He brushed them away with a ges-  
 ture of pride.  
 He glanced at the glass; when his  
 own face he eyed,  
 He was scared by its pallor. In-  
 clining his head,  
 He with tones calm, unshaken, and  
 silvery, said,  
 "Sir Ridley may enter."

In three minutes more

That benign apparition appeared at  
 the door.  
 Sir Ridley, released for a while  
 from the cares  
 Of business, and minded to breathe  
 the pure airs  
 Of the blue Pyrenees, and enjoy his  
 release,  
 In company there with his sister  
 and niece,  
 Found himself now at Luchon, —  
 distributing tracts,  
 Sowing seed by the way, and col-  
 lecting new facts  
 For Exeter Hall; he was starting  
 that night  
 For Bigorre: he had heard, to his  
 cordial delight,  
 That Lord Alfred was there, and,  
 himself, setting out  
 For the same destination: impa-  
 tient, no doubt!  
 Here some commonplace compli-  
 ments as to "the marriage"  
 Through his speech trickled softly,  
 like honey: his carriage  
 Was ready. A storm seemed to  
 threaten the weather:  
 If his young friend agreed, why  
 not travel together?  
 With a footstep uncertain and rest-  
 less, a frown  
 Of perplexity, during this speech,  
 up and down  
 Alfred Vargrave was striding; but,  
 after a pause  
 And a slight hesitation, the which  
 seemed to cause  
 Some surprise to Sir Ridley, he an-  
 swered, — "My dear  
 Sir Ridley, allow me a few mo-  
 ments here —  
 Half an hour at the most — to con-  
 clude an affair  
 Of a nature so urgent as hardly to  
 spare  
 My presence (which brought me,  
 indeed, to this spot),  
 Before I accept your kind offer."

"Why not?"

Said Sir Ridley, and smiled. Alfred  
 Vargrave, before  
 Sir Ridley observed it, had passed  
 through the door.  
 A few moments later, with footsteps  
 revealing  
 Intense agitation of uncontrolled  
 feeling, [low.  
 He was rapidly pacing the garden be-  
 What passed through his mind then  
 is more than I know,  
 But before one half-hour into dark-  
 ness had fled,  
 In the court-yard he stood with Sir  
 Ridley. His tread  
 Was firm and composed. Not a sign  
 on his face  
 Betrayed there the least agitation.  
 "The place  
 You so kindly have offered," he said,  
 "I accept."  
 And he stretched out his hand. The  
 two travellers stepped  
 Smiling into the carriage.  
 And thus, out of sight,  
 They drove down the dark road,  
 and into the night.

## XXII.

Sir Ridley was one of those wise  
 men who, so far  
 As their power of saying it goes,  
 say with Zophar,  
 "We, no doubt, are the people, and  
 wisdom shall die with us!"  
 Though of wisdom like theirs there  
 is no small supply with us.  
 Side by side in the carriage en-  
 sconced, the two men  
 Began to converse, somewhat drow-  
 sily, when  
 Alfred suddenly thought,— "Here's  
 a man of ripe age,  
 At my side, by his fellows reputed  
 as sage,  
 Who looks happy, and therefore who  
 must have been wise:  
 Suppose I with caution reveal to  
 his eyes  
 Some few of the reasons which  
 make me believe

That I neither am happy nor wise?  
 'twould relieve  
 And enlighten, perchance, my own  
 darkness and doubt."  
 For which purpose a feeler he softly  
 put out.  
 It was snapped up at once.  
 "What is truth?" jesting  
 Pilate  
 Asked, and passed from the question  
 at once with a smile at [it  
 Its utter futility. Had he addressed  
 To Ridley MacNab, he at least had  
 confessed it  
 Admitted discussion! and certainly  
 no man  
 Could more promptly have answered  
 the skeptical Roman  
 Than Ridley. Hear some street as-  
 tronomer talk!  
 Grant him two or three hearers, a  
 morsel of chalk,  
 And forthwith on the pavement  
 he'll sketch you the scheme  
 Of the heavens. Then hear him  
 enlarge on his theme!  
 Not afraid of La Place, nor of  
 Arago, he!  
 He'll prove you the whole plan in  
 plain A B C.  
 Here's your sun, — call him A; B's  
 the moon; it is clear  
 How the rest of the alphabet brings  
 up the rear  
 Of the planets. Now ask Arago,  
 ask La Place,  
 (Your sages, who speak with the  
 heavens face to face!)  
 Their science in plain A B C to ac-  
 cord  
 To your point-blank inquiry, my  
 friends! not a word  
 Will you get for your pains from  
 their sad lips. Alas!  
 Not a drop from the bottle that's  
 quite full will pass.  
 'Tis the half-empty vessel that  
 freest emits  
 The water that's in it. 'Tis thus  
 with men's wits;



Or at least with their knowledge. A  
 man's capability  
 Of imparting to others a truth with  
 facility [exactness  
 Is proportioned forever with painful  
 To the portable nature, the vulgar  
 compactness,  
 The minuteness in size, or the light-  
 ness in weight  
 Of the truth he imparts. So small  
 coins circulate  
 More freely than large ones. A beg-  
 gar asks alms,  
 And we fling him a sixpence, nor  
 feel any qualms;  
 But if every street charity shook an  
 investment,  
 Or each beggar to clothe we must  
 strip off a vestment,  
 The length of the process would  
 limit the act;  
 And therefore the truth that's sum-  
 med up in a tract  
 Is most lightly dispensed.

As for Alfred, indeed,  
 On what spoonfuls of truth he was  
 suffered to feed  
 By Sir Ridley, I know not. This  
 only I know,  
 That the two men thus talking con-  
 tinued to go  
 Onward somehow, together, — on  
 into the night, —  
 The midnight, — in which they es-  
 cape from our sight.

## XXIII.

And meanwhile a world had been  
 changed in its place,  
 And those glittering chains that o'er  
 blue balmy space  
 Hang the blessing of darkness, had  
 drawn out of sight,  
 To solace unseen hemispheres, the  
 soft night;  
 And the dew of the dayspring be-  
 nignly descended,  
 And the fair morn to all things new  
 sanction extended,  
 In the smile of the East. And the  
 lark soaring on,

Lost in light, shook the dawn with  
 a song from the sun.  
 And the world laughed.  
 It wanted but two rosy hours  
 From the noon, when they passed  
 through the thick passion-  
 flowers  
 Of the little wild garden that dim-  
 pled before  
 The small house where their car-  
 riage now stopped, at Bigorre.  
 And more fair than the flowers,  
 more fresh than the dew,  
 With her white morning robe flitting  
 joyously through  
 The dark shrubs with which the soft  
 hillside was clothed,  
 Alfred Vargrave perceived, where  
 he paused, his betrothed.  
 Matilda sprang to him, at once, with  
 a face  
 Of such sunny sweetness, such glad-  
 ness, such grace, [delight,  
 And radiant confidence, childlike  
 That his whole heart upbraided it-  
 self at that sight.  
 And he murmured, or sighed, "O,  
 how could I have strayed  
 From this sweet child, or suffered  
 in aught to invade  
 Her young claim on my life, though  
 it were for an hour,  
 The thought of another?"  
 "Look up, my sweet flower!"  
 He whispered her softly, "my heart  
 unto thee  
 Is returned, as returns to the rose  
 the wild bee!"  
 "And will wander no more?"  
 laughed Matilda.  
 "No more"  
 He repeated. And, low to himself,  
 "Yes, 'tis o'er!"  
 My course, too, is decided, Lucile!  
 Was I blind  
 To have dreamed that these clever  
 Frenchwomen of mind  
 Could satisfy simply a plain English  
 heart,  
 Or sympathize with it?"

## XXIV.

And here the first part  
Of this drama is over. The curtain  
falls furled  
On the actors within it, — the Heart  
and the World.  
Wooded and wooer have played with  
the riddle of life,  
Have they solved it?  
Appear! answer, Husband and  
Wife!

## XXV.

Yet, ere bidding farewell to Lucile  
de Nevers,  
Bear her own heart's farewell in this  
letter of hers.  
*The COMTESSE DE NEVERS to a  
FRIEND IN INDIA.*  
"Once more, O my friend, to your  
arms and your heart,  
And the places of old . . . never,  
never to part!  
Once more to the palm and the foun-  
tain! Once more  
To the land of my birth, and the  
deep skies of yore!  
From the cities of Europe, pursued  
by the fret  
Of their turmoil wherever my foot-  
steps are set;  
From the children that cry for the  
birth, and behold,  
There is no strength to bear them,  
— old Time is so old!  
From the world's weary masters,  
that come upon earth  
Sapped and mined by the fever they  
bear from their birth;  
From the men of small stature, mere  
parts of a crowd,  
Born too late, when the strength of  
the world hath been bowed;  
Back, — back to the Orient, from  
whose sunbright womb  
Sprang the giants which now are no  
more, in the bloom  
And the beauty of times that are  
faded forever!  
To the palms! to the tombs! to the  
still Sacred River!

Where I too, the child of a day that  
is done,  
First leapt into life, and looked up  
at the sun.  
Back again, back again, to the hill-  
tops of home  
I come, O my friend, my consoler,  
I come!  
Are the three intense stars, that we  
watched night by night  
Burning broad on the band of Orion  
as bright?  
Are the large Indian moons as se-  
rene as of old,  
When, as children, we gathered the  
moonbeams for gold?  
Do you yet recollect me, my friend?  
Do you still  
Remember the free games we played  
on the hill,  
'Mid those huge stones upheaped,  
where we recklessly trod  
O'er the old ruined fane of the old  
ruined god?  
How he frowned, while around him  
we carelessly played!  
That frown on my life ever after  
hath stayed,  
Like the shade of a solemn experi-  
ence upcast  
From some vague supernatural grief  
in the past.  
For the poor god, in pain, more than  
anger, he frowned.  
To perceive that our youth, though  
so fleeting, had found,  
In its transient and ignorant glad-  
ness, the bliss  
Which his science divine seemed  
divinely to miss. [yet  
Alas! you may haply remember me  
The free child, whose glad childhood  
myself I forget.  
I come — a sad woman, defrauded of  
rest:  
I bear to you only a laboring breast:  
My heart is a storm-beaten ark,  
wildly hurled  
O'er the whirlpools of time, with the  
wrecks of a world:

The dove from my bosom hath flown  
far away; [many a day  
It is flown, and returns not, though  
Have I watched from the windows  
of life for its coming.

Friend, I sigh for repose, I am  
weary of roaming.

I know not what Ararat rises for me  
Far away, o'er the waves of the  
wandering sea :

I know not what rainbow may yet,  
from far hills [tion of ills :

Lift the promise of hope, the cessa-  
But a voice, like the voice of my  
youth, in my breast

Wakes and whispers me on — to the  
East! to the East!

Shall I find the child's heart that I  
left there? or find

The lost youth I recall with its pure  
peace of mind?

Alas! who shall number the drops  
of the rain?

Or give to the dead leaves their  
greenness again?

Who shall seal up the caverns the  
earthquake hath rent?

Who shall bring forth the winds  
that within them are pent?

To a voice who shall render an im-  
age? or who

From the heats of the noontide  
shall gather the dew?

I have burned out within me the  
fuel of life

Wherefore lingers the flame? Rest  
is sweet after strife.

I would sleep for a while. I am  
weary.

“ My friend,

I had meant in these lines to re-  
gather, and send

To our old home, my life's scattered  
links. But 'tis vain!

Each attempt seems to shatter the  
chaplet again;

Only fit now for fingers like mine  
to run o'er,

Who return, a recluse, to those  
cloisters of yore

Whence too far I have wandered.

“ How many long years  
Does it seem to me now since the  
quick, scorching tears,

While I wrote to you, splashed out  
a girl's premature

Moans of pain at what women in  
silence endure!

To your eyes, friend of mine, and  
to your eyes alone,

That now long-faded page of my  
life hath been shown

Which recorded my heart's birth,  
and death, as you know,

Many years since, — how many!

“ A few months ago  
I seemed reading it backward, that

page! Why explain  
Whence or how? The old dream

of my life rose again.  
The old superstition! the idol of old!

It is over. The leaf trodden down  
in the mould

Is not to the forest more lost than  
to me [the sea

That emotion. I bury it here by  
Which will bear me anon far away

from the shore  
Of a land which my footsteps shall

visit no more.  
And a heart's *requiescat* I write on

that grave.  
Hark! the sigh of the wind, and the

sound of the wave,  
Seem like voices of spirits that

whisper me home!  
I come, O you whispering voices, I

come!  
My friend, ask me nothing.

“ Receive me alone  
As a Santon receives to his dwell-  
ing of stone

In silence some pilgrim the mid-  
night may bring :

It may be an angel that, weary of  
wing,

Hath paused in his flight from some  
city of doom,

Or only a wayfarer strayed in the  
gloom.

This only I know: that in Europe  
 at least  
 Lives the craft or the power that  
 must master our East.  
 Wherefore strive where the gods  
 must themselves yield at last?  
 Both they and their altars pass by  
 with the Past.  
 The gods of the household Time  
 thrusts from the shelf;  
 And I seem as unreal and weird to  
 myself  
 As those idols of old.

“Other times, other men,  
 Other men, other passions!  
 “So be it! yet again  
 I turn to my birthplace, the birth-  
 place of morn,  
 And the light of those lands where  
 the great sun is born!  
 Spread your arms, O, my friend!  
 on your breast let me feel  
 The repose which hath fled from  
 my own.

“Your LUCILE.”

## PART II.

### CANTO I.

#### I.

HAIL, Muse! But each Muse by this  
 time has, I know,  
 Been used up, and Apollo has bent  
 his own bow  
 All too long; so I leave unassaulted  
 the portal  
 Of Olympus, and only invoke here  
 a mortal.  
 Hail, Murray! — not Lindley, — but  
 Murray and Son.  
 Hail, omniscient, beneficent, great  
 Two-in-One!  
 In Albemarle Street may thy temple  
 long stand!  
 Long enlightened and led by thine  
 erudite hand,  
 May each novice in science nomadic  
 unravel  
 Statistical mazes of modernized  
 travel!  
 May each inn-keeping knave long  
 thy judgments revere,  
 And the postboys of Europe regard  
 thee with fear;  
 While they feel, in the silence of  
 baffled extortion,  
 That knowledge is power! Long,  
 long, like that portion

Of the national soil which the Greek  
 exile took  
 In his baggage wherever he went,  
 may thy book  
 Cheer each poor British pilgrim,  
 who trusts to thy wit  
 Not to pay through his nose just  
 for following it!  
 Mayst thou long, O instructor! pre-  
 side o'er his way,  
 And teach him alike what to praise  
 and to pay!  
 Thee, pursuing this pathway of  
 song, once again  
 I invoke, lest, unskilled, I should  
 wander in vain. [ish, refuse  
 To my call be propitious, nor, churl-  
 Thy great accents to lend to the  
 lips of my Muse;  
 For I sing of the Naiads who dwell  
 'mid the stems  
 Of the green linden-trees by the  
 waters of Ems.  
 Yes! thy spirit descends upon  
 mine, O, John Murray!  
 And I start — with thy book — for  
 the Baths in a hurry.

#### II.

“At Coblenz a bridge of boats  
 crosses the Rhine;  
 And from thence the road, winding  
 by Ehrenbreitstein,

Passes over the frontier of Nassau.  
 ("N. B. No custom-house here since the Zollverein." See Murray, paragraph 30.)  
 "The route, at each turn, Here the lover of nature allows to discern,  
 In varying prospect, a rich wooded dale: [vail  
 The vine and acacia-tree mostly pre- In the foliage observable here; and, moreover,  
 The soil is carbonic. The road, under cover  
 Of the grape-clad and mountainous upland that hems  
 Round this beautiful spot, brings the traveller to—"EMS.  
 A schnellpost from Frankfort arrives every day.  
 At the Kurhaus (the old Ducal mansion) you pay  
 Eight florins for lodgings. A Restaurateur  
 Is attached to the place; but most travellers prefer  
 (Including, indeed, many persons of note) [d'hôte.  
 To dine at the usual-priced table  
 Through the town runs the Lahn, the steep green banks of which  
 Two rows of white picturesque houses enrich;  
 And between the high road and the river is laid  
 Out a sort of a garden, called 'THE Promenade.'  
 Female visitors here, who may make up their mind  
 To ascend to the top of these mountains, will find  
 On the banks of the stream, saddled all the day long,  
 Troops of donkeys — sure-footed — proverbially strong; "  
 And the traveller at Ems may remark, as he passes,  
 Here, as elsewhere, the women run after the asses.

## III.

'Mid the world's weary denizens bound for these springs  
 In the month when the merle on the maple-bough sings,  
 Pursued to the place from dissimilar paths [the baths  
 By a similar sickness, there came to  
 Four sufferers, — each stricken deep through the heart,  
 Or the head, by the self-same invisible dart [the noon,  
 Of the arrow that flieth unheard in  
 From the sickness that walketh unseen in the moon,  
 Through this great lazaretto of life, wherein each  
 Infects with his own sores the next within reach.  
 First of these were a young English husband and wife,  
 Grown weary ere half through the journey of life.  
 O Nature, say where, thou gray mother of earth,  
 Is the strength of thy youth? that thy womb brings to birth  
 Only old men to-day! On the winds, as of old, [boid;  
 Thy voice in its accent is joyous and  
 Thy forests are green as of yore; and thine oceans  
 Yet move in the might of their ancient emotions:  
 But man — thy last birth and thy best — is no more  
 Life's free lord, that looked up to the starlight of yore,  
 With the faith on the brow, and the fire in the eyes,  
 The firm foot on the earth, the high heart in the skies;  
 But a gray-headed infant, defrauded of youth,  
 Born too late or too early.  
 The lady, in truth,  
 Was young, fair, and gentle; and never was given  
 To more heavenly eyes, the pure azure of heaven.

Never yet did the sun touch to rip-  
ples of gold  
Tresses brighter than those which  
her soft hand unrolled  
From her noble and innocent brow,  
when she rose,  
An Aurora, at dawn, from her balmy  
repose,  
And into the mirror the bloom and  
the blush  
Of her beauty broke, glowing; like  
light in a gush  
From the sunrise in summer.

Love, roaming, shall meet  
But rarely a nature more sound or  
more sweet —

Eyes brighter — brows whiter — a  
figure more fair —

Or lovelier lengths of more radiant  
hair —

Than thine, Lady Alfred! And  
here I aver

(May those that have seen thee de-  
clare if I err) [contain

That not all the oysters in Britain  
A pearl pure as thou art.

Let some one explain, —  
Who may know more than I of the  
intimate life

Of the pearl with the oyster, — why  
yet in his wife,

In despite of her beauty — and most  
when he felt

His soul to the sense of her loveli-  
ness melt —

Lord Alfred missed something he  
sought for: indeed,

The more that he missed it the  
greater the need;

Till it seemed to himself he could  
willingly spare

All the charms that he found for  
the one charm not there.

IV.

For the blessings Life lends us, it  
strictly demands

The worth of their full usufruct at  
our hands.

And the value of all things exists,  
not indeed

In themselves, but man's use of  
them, feeding man's need.

Alfred Vargrave, in wedding with  
beauty and youth,

Had embraced both Ambition and  
Wealth. Yet in truth

Unfulfilled the ambition, and sterile  
the wealth [health),

(In a life paralyzed by a moral ill  
Had remained, while the beauty and

youth, unredeemed  
From a vague disappointment at all  
things, but seemed

Day by day to reproach him in si-  
lence for all

That lost youth in himself they had  
failed to recall.

No career had he followed, no ob-  
ject obtained

In the world by those worldly ad-  
vantages gained

From nuptials beyond which once  
seemed to appear,

Lit by love, the broad path of a  
brilliant career.

All that glittered and gleamed  
through the moonlight of youth

With a glory so fair, now that man-  
hood in truth

Grasped and gathered it, seemed  
like that false fairy gold

Which leaves in the hand only moss,  
leaves, and mould!

V.

Fairy gold! moss and leaves! and  
the young Fairy Bride?

Lived there yet fairy-lands in the  
face at his side?

Say, O friend, if at evening thou  
ever hast watched

Some pale and impalpable vapor, de-  
tached

From the dim and disconsolate  
earth, rise and fall

O'er the light of a sweet serene  
star, until all

The chilled splendor reluctantly  
waned in the deep

Of its own native heaven? Even so  
seemed to creep

O'er that fair and ethereal face, day  
 by day, [away,  
 While the radiant vermeil, subsiding  
 Hid its light in the heart, the faint  
 gradual veil  
 Of a sadness unconscious.

The lady grew pale  
 As silent her lord grew: and both,  
 as they eyed

Each the other askance, turned,  
 and secretly sighed.

Ah, wise friend, what avails all ex-  
 perience can give?

True, we know what life is — but,  
 alas! do we live?

The grammar of life we have gotten  
 by heart,

But life's self we have made a dead  
 language, — an art,

Not a voice. Could we speak it,  
 but once, as 'twas spoken

When the silence of passion the  
 first time was broken!

Cuvier knew the world better than  
 Adam, no doubt:

But the last man, at best, was but  
 learnéd about

What the first without learning;  
*enjoyed*. What art thou

To the man of to-day, O Leviathan,  
 now?

A science. What wert thou to him  
 that from ocean

First beheld thee appear? A sur-  
 prise,—an emotion!

When life leaps in the veins, when  
 it beats in the heart,

When it thrills as it fills every ani-  
 mate part,

Where lurks it? how works it? . . .  
 we scarcely detect it.

But life goes: the heart dies: haste,  
 O leech, and dissect it!

This accurséd æsthetical, ethical age  
 Hath so fingered life's hornbook, so  
 blurred every page,

That the old glad romance, the gay  
 chivalrous story,

With its fables of faery, its legends  
 of glory,

Is turned to a tedious instruction,  
 not new  
 To the children that read it insipidly  
 through.

We know too much of Love ere we  
 love. We can trace

Nothing new, unexpected, or strange  
 in his face

When we see it at last. 'Tis the  
 same little Cupid,

With the same dimpled cheek, and  
 the smile almost stupid,

We have seen in our pictures, and  
 stuck on our shelves,

And copied a hundred times over,  
 ourselves.

And wherever we turn, and what-  
 ever we do,

Still, that horrible sense of the *déjà  
 connu!*

## VI.

Perchance 'twas the fault of the life  
 that they led;

Perchance 'twas the fault of the  
 novels they read;

Perchance 'twas a fault in them-  
 selves: I am bound not

To say: this I know — that these  
 two creatures found not

In each other some sign they ex-  
 pected to find

Of a something unnamed in the  
 heart or the mind;

And, missing it, each felt a right  
 to complain

Of a sadness which each found no  
 word to explain.

Whatever it was, the world noticed  
 not it

In the light-hearted beauty, the  
 light-hearted wit.

Still, as once with the actors in  
 Greece, 'tis the case,

Each must speak to the crown with  
 a mask on his face.

Praise followed Matilda wherever  
 she went.

She was flattered. Can flattery pur-  
 chase content?

Yes. While to its voice, for a moment, she listened,  
The young cheek still bloomed, and the soft eyes still glistened;  
And her lord, when, like one of those light vivid things  
That glide down the gauzes of summer with wings

Of rapturous radiance, unconscious she moved

Through that buzz of inferior creatures, which proved [forgot  
Her beauty, their envy, one moment 'Mid the many charms there, the one charm that was not:

And when o'er her beauty enraptured he bowed,

(As they turned to each other, each flushed from the crowd,)

And murmured those praises which yet seemed more dear

Than the praises of others had grown to her ear,

She, too, ceased awhile her own fate to regret:

"Yes! . . . he loves me," she sighed;  
"this is love, then,—and yet—!"

VII.

Ah, that *yet!* fatal word! 'tis the moral of all

Thought and felt, seen or done, in this world since the Fall!

It stands at the end of each sentence we learn;

It flits in the vista of all we discern;

It leads us, forever and ever, away To find in to-morrow what flies with to-day.

'Twas this same little fatal and mystical word [and lord

That now, like a mirage, led my lady To the waters of Ems from the waters of Marah;

Drooping pilgrims in Fashion's blank, arid Sahara!

VIII.

At the same time, pursued by a spell much the same,

To these waters two other worn pilgrims there came:

One a man, one a woman: just now, at the latter,  
As the Reader I mean by and by to look at her  
And judge for himself, I will not even glance.

IX.

Of the self-crowned young kings of the Fashion in France

Whose resplendent regalia so dazzled the sight,

Whose horse was so perfect, whose boots were so bright,

Who so hailed in the salon, so marked in the Bois,

Who so welcomed by all, as Eugène de Luvois?

Of all the smooth-browed premature debauchees

In that town of all towns, where Debauchery sees

On the forehead of youth her mark everywhere graven,—

In Paris I mean,—where the streets are all paven

By those two fiends whom Milton saw bridging the way

From Hell to this planet,—who, haughty and gay,

The free rebel of life, bound or led by no law,

Walked that causeway as bold as Eugène de Luvois?

Yes! he marched through the great masquerade, loud of tongue,

Bold of brow: but the motley he masked in, it hung

So loose, trailed so wide, and appeared to impede

So strangely at times the vexed effort at speed,

That a keen eye might guess it was made — not for him,

But some brawler more stalwart of stature and limb.

That it irked him, in truth, you at times could divine,

For when low was the music, and spilt was the wine,



He would clutch at the garment, as  
though it oppressed  
And stifled some impulse that  
choked in his breast.

## x.

What! he, . . . the light sport of  
his frivolous ease!

Was he, too, a prey to a mortal dis-  
ease?

My friend, hear a parable: ponder  
it well:

For a moral there is in the tale that  
I tell.

One evening I sat in the Palais  
Royal,

And there, while I laughed at Gras-  
sot and Arnal,

My eye fell on the face of a man at  
my side;

Every time that he laughed I ob-  
served that he sighed,

As though vexed to be pleased. I  
remarked that he sat

Ill at ease on his seat, and kept  
twirling his hat

In his hand, with a look of unquiet  
abstraction.

I inquired the cause of his dissatis-  
faction.

"Sir," he said, "if what vexes me  
here you would know,

Learn that, passing this way some  
few half-hours ago,

I walked into the Français, to look  
at Rachel.

(Sir, that woman in Phèdre is a  
miracle!) — Well,

I asked for a box: they were occu-  
pied all:

For a seat in the balcony: all taken!  
a stall:

Taken too: the whole house was as  
full as could be, —

Not a hole for a rat! I had just time  
to see [friend

The lady I love *tête-à-tête* with a  
In a box out of reach at the oppo-  
site end:

Then the crowd pushed me out.  
What was left me to do?

I tried for the tragedy . . . *que  
voulez-vous?*

Every place for the tragedy booked!  
. . . *mon ami,*

The farce was close by: . . . at the  
*farce me voici!*

The piece is a new one: and Gras-  
sot plays well:

There is drollery, too, in that fel-  
low Ravel:

And Hyacinth's nose is superb! . . .  
Yet I meant

My evening elsewhere, and not thus,  
to have spent.

Fate orders these things by her will,  
not by ours!

Sir, mankind is the sport of invis-  
ible powers."

I once met the Duc de Luvois for a  
moment;

And I marked, when his features I  
fixed in my comment,

O'er those features the same vague  
disquietude stray

I had seen on the face of my friend  
at the play;

And I thought that he too, very  
probably, spent

His evenings not wholly as first he  
had meant.

## xi.

O source of the holiest joys we in-  
herit,

O Sorrow, thou solemn, invisible  
spirit!

Ill fares it with man when, through  
life's desert sand,

Grown impatient too soon for the  
long-promised land,

He turns from the worship of thee,  
as thou art,

An expressless and imageless truth  
in the heart,

And takes of the jewels of Egypt,  
the pelf

And the gold of the goddess, to  
make to himself

A gaudy, idolatrous image of thee,  
And then bows to the sound of the  
cymbal the knee.

The sorrows we make to ourselves  
are false gods:  
Like the prophets of Baal, our  
bosoms with rods  
We may smite, we may gash at our  
hearts till they bleed,  
But these idols are blind, deaf, and  
dumb to our need.  
The land is athirst, and cries out!  
. . . 'tis in vain;  
The great blessing of Heaven de-  
scends not in rain.

## XII.

It was night; and the lamps were  
beginning to gleam  
Through the long linden-trees, fold-  
ed each in his dream,  
From that building which looks like  
a temple . . . and is  
The Temple of—Health? Nay, but  
enter! I wish  
That never the rosy-hued deity  
knew  
One votary out of that sallow-  
cheeked crew  
Of Courlanders, Wallacs, Greeks,  
affable Russians,  
Explosive Parisians, potato-faced  
Prussians;  
Jews—Hamburghers chiefly;—pure  
patriots,—Suabians;—  
“Cappadocians and Elamites, Cretes  
and Arabians,  
And the dwellers in Pontus” . . .  
My muse will not weary  
More lines with the list of them . . .  
*cur fremuere?*  
What is it they murmur and mut-  
ter, and hum?  
Into what Pandemonium is Pente-  
cost come?  
O, what is the name of the god at  
whose fane  
Every nation is mixed in so motley  
a train?  
What weird Kabala lies on those  
tables outspread?  
To what oracle turns with attention  
each head?

What holds these pale worshippers  
each so devout,  
And what are those hierophants  
busied about?

## XIII.

Here passes, repasses, and flits to  
and fro,  
And rolls without ceasing the great  
Yes and No:  
Round this altar alternate the weird  
Passions dance,  
And the God worshipped here is  
the old God of Chance.  
Through the wide-open doors of  
the distant saloon  
Flute, hautboy, and fiddle are  
squeaking in tune;  
And an indistinct music forever is  
rolled,  
That mixes and chimes with the  
chink of the gold,  
From a vision, that flits in a lumin-  
ous haze,  
Of figures forever eluding the gaze;  
It fleets through the doorway, it  
gleams on the glass,  
And the weird words pursue it—  
*Rouge, Impair, et Passe!*  
Like a sound borne in sleep through  
such dreams as encumber  
With haggard emotions the wild  
wicked slumber  
Of some witch when she seeks,  
through a night-mare, to grab  
at  
The hot hoof of the fiend, on her  
way to the Sabbat.

## XIV.

The Duc de Luvois and Lord Alfred  
had met  
Some few evenings ago (for the sea-  
son as yet  
Was but young) in this self-same  
Pavilion of Chance.  
The idler from England, the idler  
from France  
Shook hands, each, of course, with  
much cordial pleasure:  
An acquaintance at Ems is to most  
men a treasure,

And they both were too well-bred  
 in aught to betray  
 One discourteous remembrance of  
 things passed away.  
 'Twas a sight that was pleasant,  
 indeed, to be seen,  
 These friends exchange greetings;  
 — the men who had been  
 Foes so nearly in days that were  
 past.

This, no doubt,

Is why, on the night I am speaking  
 about,  
 My Lord Alfred sat down by him-  
 self at roulette,  
 Without one suspicion his bosom  
 to fret,  
 Although he had left, with his pleas-  
 ant French friend,  
 Matilda, half vexed, at the room's  
 farthest end.

xv.

Lord Alfred his combat with For-  
 tune began  
 With a few modest thalers — away  
 they all ran —  
 The reserve followed fast in the  
 rear. As his purse  
 Grew lighter his spirits grew sensi-  
 bly worse.  
 One needs not a Bacon to find a  
 cause for it:  
 'Tis an old law in physics — *Natura*  
*abhorret*  
*Vacuum* — and my lord, as he  
 watched his last crown  
 Tumble into the bank, turned away  
 with a frown  
 Which the brows of Napoleon him-  
 self might have decked  
 On that day of all days when an  
 empire was wrecked  
 On thy plain, Waterloo, and he wit-  
 nessed the last  
 Of his favorite Guard cut to pieces,  
 aghast!  
 Just then Alfred felt, he could  
 scarcely tell why,  
 Within him the sudden strange  
 sense that some eye

Had long been intently regarding  
 him there, —  
 That some gaze was upon him too  
 searching to bear.  
 He rose and looked up. Was it  
 fact? Was it fable?  
 Was it dream? Was it waking?  
 Across the green table,  
 That face, with its features so fa-  
 tally known, —  
 Those eyes, whose deep gaze an-  
 swered strangely his own, —  
 What was it? Some ghost from its  
 grave come again?  
 Some cheat of a feverish, fanciful  
 brain?  
 Or was it herself — with those deep  
 eyes of hers,  
 And that face unforgotten? — Lu-  
 cile de Nevers!

xv.

Ah, well that pale woman a phan-  
 tom might seem,  
 Who appeared to herself but the  
 dream of a dream!  
 'Neath those features so calm, that  
 fair forehead so hushed,  
 That pale cheek forever by passion  
 unflushed;  
 There yawned an insatiable void,  
 and there heaved  
 A tumult of restless regrets unre-  
 lieved.  
 The brief noon of beauty was pass-  
 ing away,  
 And the chill of the twilight fell,  
 silent and gray,  
 O'er that deep, self-perceived isola-  
 tion of soul.  
 And now, as all round her the dim  
 evening stole,  
 With its weird desolations, she in-  
 wardly grieved  
 For the want of that tender assur-  
 ance received  
 From the warmth of a whisper, the  
 glance of an eye,  
 Which should say, or should look,  
 "Fear thou naught, — *I am*  
*by!*"

And thus, through that lonely and self-fixed existence,  
 Crept a vague sense of silence, and horror, and distance:  
 A strange sort of faint-footed fear, — like a mouse  
 That comes out, when 'tis dark, in some old ducal house  
 Long deserted, where no one the creature can scare,  
 And the forms on the arras are all that move there.  
 In Rome, — in the Forum, — there opened one night  
 A gulf. All the augurs turned pale at the sight.  
 In this omen the anger of Heaven they read.  
 Men consulted the gods: then the oracle said. — [till at last  
 “Ever open this gulf shall endure, That which Rome hath most precious within it be cast.”  
 The Romans threw in it their corn and their stuff,  
 But the gulf yawned as wide. Rome seemed likely enough  
 To be ruined ere this rent in her heart she could choke.  
 Then Curtius, revering the oracle, spoke: [tion is come:  
 “O Quirites! to this Heaven’s quest-What to Rome is most precious? The manhood of Rome.”  
 He plunged, and the gulf closed. The tale is not new:  
 But the moral applies many ways, and is true.  
 How, for hearts rent in twain, shall the curse be destroyed?  
 ’Tis a warm human life that must fill up the void.  
 Through many a heart runs the rent in the fable; [able?  
 But who to discover a Curtius is

## XVII.

Back she came from her long hiding-place, at the source  
 Of the sunrise; where, fair in their fabulous course,

Run the rivers of Eden: an exile again,  
 To the cities of Europe, — the scenes, and the men,  
 And the life, and the ways, she had left: still oppressed  
 With the same hungry heart, and unpeaceable breast.  
 The same, to the same things! The world, she had quitted  
 With a sigh, with a sigh she re-entered. Soon flitted  
 Through the salons and clubs, to the great satisfaction [tion.  
 Of Paris, the news of a novel attraction.  
 The enchanting Lucile, the gay Countess, once more  
 To her old friend, the World, had re-opened her door;  
 The World came, and shook hands, and was pleased and amused  
 With what the World then went away and abused.  
 From the woman’s fair fame it in naught could detract:  
 ’Twas the woman’s free genius it vexed and attacked  
 With a sneer at her freedom of action and speech.  
 But its light careless cavils, in truth, could not reach  
 The lone heart they aimed at. Her tears fell beyond  
 The world’s limit, to feel that the world could respond  
 To that heart’s deepest, innermost yearning, in naught.  
 ’Twas no longer this earth’s idle inmates she sought:  
 The wit of the woman sufficed to engage [men of the age.  
 In the woman’s gay court the first Some had genius; and all, wealth of mind to confer  
 On the world: but that wealth was not lavished for her.  
 For the genius of man, though so human indeed,  
 When called out to man’s help by some great human need,

The right to a man's chance acquaintance refuses  
 To use what it hoards for mankind's nobler uses.  
 Genius touches the world at but one point alone  
 Of that spacious circumference, never quite known  
 To the world: all the infinite number of lines  
 That radiate thither a mere point combines, [tion apart  
 But one only, — some central affection  
 From the reach of the world, in which Genius is Heart,  
 And love, life's fine centre, includes heart and mind.  
 And therefore it was that Lucile sighed to find [her ken,  
 Men of genius appear, one and all in  
 When they stooped themselves to it, as mere clever men;  
 Artists, statesmen, and they in whose works are unfurled  
 Worlds new-fashioned for man, as mere men of the world.  
 And so, as alone now she stood, in the sight  
 Of the sunset of youth, with her face from the light,  
 And watched her own shadow grow long at her feet,  
 As though stretched out, the shade of some *other* to meet,  
 The woman felt homeless and childless: in scorn  
 She seemed mocked by the voices of children unborn;  
 And when from these sombre reflections away  
 She turned, with a sigh, to that gay world, more gay  
 For her presence within it, she knew herself friendless;  
 That her path led from peace, and that path appeared endless!  
 That even her beauty had been but a snare,  
 And her wit sharpened only the edge of despair.

## XVIII.

With a face all transfigured and flushed by surprise,  
 Alfred turned to Lucile. With those deep searching eyes  
 She looked into his own. Not a word that she said,  
 Not a look, not a blush, one emotion betrayed.  
 She seemed to smile through him, at something beyond:  
 When she answered his questions, she seemed to respond  
 To some voice in herself. With no trouble descried,  
 To each troubled inquiry she calmly replied.  
 Not so he. At the sight of that face back again  
 To his mind came the ghost of a long-stifled pain,  
 A remembered resentment, half-checked by a wild  
 And relentful regret like a motherless child  
 Softly seeking admittance, with plaintive appeal,  
 To the heart which resisted its entrance.  
 Lucile  
 And himself thus, however, with freedom allowed  
 To old friends, talking still side by side, left the crowd  
 By the crowd unobserved. Not unnoticed, however,  
 By the Duke and Matilda. Matilda had never  
 Seen her husband's new friend.  
 She had followed by chance,  
 Or by instinct, the sudden, half-menacing glance  
 Which the Duke, when he witnessed their meeting, had turned  
 On Lucile and Lord Alfred; and, scared, she discerned  
 On his features the shade of a gloom so profound  
 That she shuddered instinctively  
 Deaf to the sound

Of her voice, to some startled inquiry  
 of hers  
 He replied not, but murmured, "Lucile de Nevers  
 Once again then? so be it!" In the  
 mind of that man,  
 At that moment, there shaped itself  
 vaguely the plan  
 Of a purpose malignant and dark,  
 such alone  
 (To his own secret heart but imper-  
 fectly shown)  
 As could spring from the cloudy,  
 fierce chaos of thought  
 By which all his nature to tumult  
 was wrought.

## XIX.

"So!" he thought, "they meet thus:  
 and reweave the old charm!  
 And she hangs on his voice, and she  
 leans on his arm,  
 And she heeds me not, seeks me not,  
 recks not of me!  
 O, what if I showed her that I, too  
 can be  
 Loved by one—her own rival—more  
 fair and more young?"  
 The serpent rose in him: a serpent  
 which, stung,  
 Sought to sting.

Each unconscious, indeed, of  
 the eye  
 Fixed upon them, Lucile and my  
 lord sauntered by,  
 In converse which seemed to be  
 earnest. A smile  
 Now and then seemed to show where  
 their thoughts touched. Mean-  
 while  
 The muse of this story, convinced  
 that they need her,  
 To the Duke and Matilda returns,  
 gentle Reader.

## XX.

The Duke, with that sort of aggres-  
 sive false praise  
 Which is meant a resentful remon-  
 strance to raise  
 From a listener (as sometimes a  
 judge, just before

He pulls down the black cap, very  
 gently goes o'er  
 The case for the prisoner, and deals  
 tenderly  
 With the man he is minded to hang  
 by and by),  
 Had referred to Lucile, and then  
 stopped to detect [effect  
 In the face of Matilda the growing  
 Of the words he had dropped.  
 There's no weapon that slays  
 Its victim so surely (if well aimed)  
 as praise.  
 Thus, a pause on their converse had  
 fallen: and now  
 Each was silent, preoccupied,  
 thoughtful.

You know  
 There are moments when silence,  
 prolonged and unbroken,  
 More expressive may be than all  
 words ever spoken.  
 It is when the heart has an instinct  
 of what  
 In the heart of another is passing.  
 And that  
 In the heart of Matilda, what was it?  
 Whence came  
 To her cheek on a sudden that trem-  
 ulous flame?  
 What weighed down her head?  
 All your eye could discover  
 Was the fact that Matilda was  
 troubled. Moreover  
 That trouble the Duke's presence  
 seemed to renew.  
 She, however, broke silence, the  
 first of the two.  
 The Duke was too prudent to shat-  
 ter the spell  
 Of a silence which suited his pur-  
 pose so well.  
 She was plucking the leaves from a  
 pale blush rose blossom  
 Which had fallen from the nosegay  
 she held in her bosom.  
 "This poor flower," she said, "seems  
 it not out of place  
 In this hot lamplit air, with its  
 fresh, fragile grace?"

She bent her head low as she spoke.  
 With a smile  
 The Duke watched her caressing  
 the leaves all the while,  
 And continued on his side the silence. He knew  
 This would force his companion  
 their talk to renew  
 At the point that he wished; and  
 Matilda divined  
 The significant pause with new  
 trouble of mind.  
 She lifted one moment her head;  
 but her look  
 Encountered the ardent regard of  
 the Duke,  
 And dropped back on her floweret  
 abashed. Then, still seeking  
 The assurance she fancied she  
 showed him by speaking,  
 She conceived herself safe in adopting  
 again  
 The theme she should most have  
 avoided just then.

XXI.

"Duke," she said, . . . and she felt, as  
 she spoke, her cheek burned,  
 "You know, then, this . . . lady?"  
 "Too well!" he returned.

MATILDA.

True; you drew with emotion her  
 portrait just now.

LUVOIS.

With emotion?

MATILDA.

Yes, yes! you described her, I know,  
 As possessed of a charm all unrivalled.

LUVOIS.

Alas!

You mistook me completely! You,  
 madam, surpass  
 This lady as moonlight does lamp-  
 light; as youth  
 Surpasses its best imitations; as  
 truth  
 The fairest of falsehoods surpasses;  
 as nature

Surpasses art's masterpiece; ay, as  
 the creature  
 Fresh and pure in its native adorn-  
 ment surpasses  
 All the charms got by heart at the  
 world's looking-glasses!

"Yet you said,"—she continued  
 with some trepidation,  
 "That you quite comprehended" . . .  
 a slight hesitation  
 Shook the sentence, . . . "a passion  
 as strong as"

LUVOIS.

True, true!

But not in a man that had once  
 looked at you.

Nor can I conceive, or excuse, or . . .  
 "Hush, hush!"

She broke in, all more fair for one  
 innocent blush.

"Between man and woman these  
 things differ so!

It may be that the world pardons . . .  
 (how should I know?)

In you what it visits on us; or 'tis  
 true,

It may be, that we women are better  
 than you."

LUVOIS.

Who denies it? Yet, madam, once  
 more you mistake.

The world, in its judgment, some  
 difference may make

'Twixt the man and the woman, so  
 far as respects

Its social enactments; but not as  
 affects

The one sentiment which, it were  
 easy to prove,

Is the sole law we look to the moment  
 we love.

MATILDA.

That may be. Yet I think I should  
 be less severe.

Although so inexperienced in such  
 things, I fear

I have learned that the heart cannot  
always repress  
Or account for the feelings which  
sway it.

“Yes! yes!  
That is too true, indeed!” . . . the  
Duke sighed.

And again  
For one moment in silence con-  
tinued the twain.

## XXII.

At length the Duke slowly, as though  
he had needed

All this time to repress his emo-  
tions, proceeded:

“And yet! . . . what avails, then,  
to woman the gift

Of a beauty like yours, if it cannot  
uplift

Her heart from the reach of one  
doubt, one despair,

One pang of wronged love, to which  
women less fair

Are exposed, when they love?”

With a quick change of tone,  
As though by resentment impelled,  
he went on:—

“The name that you bear, it is  
whispered, you took

From love, not convention. Well,  
lady, . . . that look

So excited, so keen, on the face you  
must know

Throughout all its expressions,—  
that rapturous glow—

Those eloquent features—signifi-  
cant eyes—

Which that pale woman sees, yet  
betrays no surprise,”

(He pointed his hand as he spoke  
to the door,

Fixing with it Lucile and Lord Al-  
fred), . . . “before,

Have you ever once seen what just  
now you may view

In that face so familiar? . . . no,  
lady, 'tis new.

Young, lovely, and loving, no doubt,  
as you are,

Are you loved?” . . .

## XXIII.

He looked at her—paused—felt  
if thus far

The ground held yet. The ardor  
with which he had spoken,

This close, rapid question, thus sud-  
denly broken, [of fear,

Inspired in Matilda a vague sense  
As though some indefinite danger

were near.  
With composure, however, at once  
she replied:—

“'Tis three years since the day  
when I first was a bride,

And my husband I never had cause  
to suspect;

Nor ever have stooped, sir, such  
cause to detect. [see—

Yet if in his looks or his acts I should  
See, or fancy—some moment's ob-  
livion of me,

I trust that I too should forget it,—  
for you

Must have seen that my heart is my  
husband's.”

## The hue

On her cheek, with the effort where-  
with to the Duke

She had uttered this vague and  
half-frightened rebuke,

Was white as the rose in her hand.  
The last word

Seemed to die on her lip, and could  
scarcely be heard.

There was silence again.

A great step had been made  
By the Duke in the words he that

evening had said.  
There, half drowned by the music,

Matilda, that night,  
Had listened,—long listened,—no

doubt, in despite  
Of herself, to a voice she should

never have heard,  
And her heart by that voice had

been troubled and stirred.  
And so, having suffered in silence

his eye  
To fathom her own, he resumed,

with a sigh:



## XXIV.

"Will you suffer me, lady, your  
 thoughts to invade  
 By disclosing my own? The posi-  
 tion," he said,  
 "In which we so strangely seem  
 placed may excuse  
 The frankness and force of the  
 words which I use.  
 You say that your heart is your  
 husband's. You say  
 That you love him. You think so,  
 of course, lady . . . nay,  
 Such a love, I admit, were a merit,  
 no doubt.  
 But, trust me, no true love there  
 can be without  
 Its dread penalty — jealousy.  
 "Well, do not start!  
 Until now, — either thanks to a  
 singular art  
 Of supreme self-control, you have  
 held them all down  
 Unrevealed in your heart, — or you  
 never have known  
 Even one of those fierce irresistible  
 pangs  
 Which deep passion engenders; that  
 anguish which hangs  
 On the heart like a nightmare, by  
 jealousy bred.  
 But if, lady, the love you describe,  
 in the bed [posed  
 Of a blissful security thus hath re-  
 Undisturbed with mild eyelids on  
 happiness closed,  
 Were it not to expose to a peril un-  
 just,  
 And most cruel, that happy repose  
 you so trust  
 To meet, to receive, and, indeed, it  
 may be, [to see  
 For how long I know not, continue  
 A woman whose place rivals yours  
 in the life  
 And the heart which not only your  
 title of wife, [alone,  
 But also (forgive me!) your beauty  
 Should have made wholly yours? —  
 You, who gave all your own!

Reflect! — 'tis the peace of exist-  
 ence you stake  
 On the turn of a die. And for whose  
 — for his sake?  
 While you witness this woman, the  
 false point of view  
 From which she must now be re-  
 garded by you  
 Will exaggerate to you, whatever  
 they be,  
 The charms I admit she possesses.  
 To me  
 They are trivial indeed; yet to your  
 eyes, I fear  
 And foresee, they will true and in-  
 trinsic appear.  
 Self-unconscious, and sweetly un-  
 able to guess  
 How more lovely by far is the grace  
 you possess,  
 You will wrong your own beauty.  
 The graces of art,  
 You will take for the natural charm  
 of the heart;  
 Studied manners, the brilliant and  
 bold repartee,  
 Will too soon in that fatal com-  
 parison be  
 To your fancy more fair than the  
 sweet timid sense  
 Which, in shrieking, betrays its own  
 best eloquence.  
 O then, lady, then, you will feel in  
 your heart [ous dart!  
 The poisonous pain of a fierce jeal-  
 While you see her, yourself you no  
 longer will see, —  
 You will hear her, and hear not  
 yourself, — you will be  
 Unhappy; unhappy, because you  
 will deem  
 Your own power less great than  
 her power will seem.  
 And I shall not be by your side, day  
 by day [to say  
 In spite of your noble displeasure,  
 'You are fairer than she, as the  
 star is more fair  
 Than the diamond, the brightest  
 that beauty can wear!'"

## XXV.

This appeal, both by looks and by  
language, increased  
The trouble Matilda felt grown in  
her breast.

Still she spoke with what calmness  
she could:—

“Sir, the while  
I thank you,” she said, with a faint  
scornful smile,

“For your fervor in painting my  
fancied distress:

Allow me the right some surprise  
to express

At the zeal you betray in disclosing  
to me

The possible depth of my own  
misery.”

“That zeal would not startle you,  
madam,” he said,

“Could you read in my heart, as  
myself I have read,

The peculiar interest which causes  
that zeal—”

Matilda her terror no more could  
conceal.

“Duke,” she answered in accents  
short, cold, and severe,

As she rose from her seat, “I con-  
tinue to hear;

But permit me to say, I no more  
understand”

“Forgive!” with a nervous appeal  
of the hand,

And a well-feigned confusion of  
voice and of look,

“Forgive, O, forgive me!” at once  
cried the Duke,

“I forgot that you know me so  
slightly. Your leave

I entreat (from your anger those  
words to retrieve)

For one moment to speak of my-  
self,—for I think

That you wrong me—”

His voice as in pain seemed to  
sink;

And tears in his eyes, as he lifted  
them, glistened.

## XXVI.

Matilda, despite of herself, sat and  
listened.

## XXVII.

“Beneath an exterior which seems,  
and may be,

Worldly, frivolous, careless, my  
heart hides in me,”

He continued, “a sorrow which  
draws me to side

With all things that suffer. Nay,  
laugh not,” he cried,

“At so strange an avowal.

“I seek at a ball,  
For instance,—the beauty admired  
by all?

No! some plain, insignificant crea-  
ture, who sits

Scorned of course by the beauties,  
and shunned by the wits.

All the world is accustomed to  
wound, or neglect,

Or oppress, claims my heart and  
commands my respect.

No Quixote, I do not affect to be-  
long,

I admit, to those chartered redres-  
sers of wrong;

But I seek to console, where I can.  
’Tis a part

Not brilliant, I own, yet its joys  
bring no smart.”

These trite words, from the tone  
which he gave them, received

An appearance of truth, which  
might well be believed

By a heart shrewder yet than Ma-  
tilda’s.

And so

He continued . . . “O lady! alas,  
could you know

What injustice and wrong in this  
world I have seen!

How many a woman, believed to  
have been [aside

Without a regret, I have known turn  
To burst into heart-broken tears  
undescried!

On how many a lip have I witnessed  
the smile

Which but hid what was breaking  
the poor heart the while!"  
Said Matilda, "Your life, it would  
seem, then, must be  
One long act of devotion."

"Perhaps so," said he;  
"But at least that devotion small  
merit can boast,  
For one day may yet come, — if *one*  
day at the most, —  
When, perceiving at last all the dif-  
ference — how great! —  
'Twixt the heart that neglects and  
the heart that can wait.  
'Twixt the natures that pity, the  
natures that pain,  
Some woman, that else might have  
passed in disdain  
Or indifference by me, — in passing  
*that day*  
Might pause with a word or a smile  
to repay  
This devotion, — and then" . . .

## XXVIII.

To Matilda's relief  
At that moment her husband ap-  
proached.

With some grief  
I must own that her welcome, per-  
chance, was expressed  
The more eagerly just for one  
twinge in her breast  
Of a conscience disturbed, and her  
smile not less warm,  
Though she saw the Comtesse de  
Nevers on his arm.  
The Duke turned and adjusted his  
collar.

Thought he,  
"Good! the gods fight my battle  
to-night. I foresee  
That the family doctor's the part I  
must play.  
Very well! but the patients my  
visits shall pay."  
Lord Alfred presented Lucile to his  
wife;  
And Matilda, repressing with effort  
the strife

Of emotions which made her voice  
shake, murmured low  
Some faint, troubled greeting. The  
Duke, with a bow  
Which betokened a distant defiance,  
replied  
To Lucile's startled cry, as surprised  
she descried  
Her former gay wooer. Anon, with  
the grace  
Of that kindness which seeks to  
win kindness, her place  
She assumed by Matilda, uncon-  
scious, perchance,  
Or resolved not to notice, the half-  
frightened glance  
That followed that movement.

The Duke to his feet  
Arose; and, in silence, relinquished  
his seat.

One must own that the moment  
was awkward for all;  
But nevertheless, before long, the  
strange thrall  
Of Lucile's gracious tact was by  
every one felt,  
And from each the reserve seemed,  
reluctant, to melt;  
Thus, conversing together, the  
whole of the four  
Through the crowd sauntered,  
smiling.

## XXIX.

Approaching the door,  
Eugène de Luvois, who had fallen  
behind,  
By Lucile, after some hesitation,  
was joined  
With a gesture of gentle and kindly  
appeal  
Which appeared to imply, without  
words, "Let us feel  
That the friendship between us in  
years that are fled,  
Has survived one mad moment for-  
gotten," she said,  
"You remain, Duke, at Ems?"  
He turned on her a look  
Of frigid, resentful, and sullen re-  
buke;

And then, with a more than significant glance

At Matilda, maliciously answered, "Perchance

I have here an attraction. And you?" he returned.

Lucile's eyes had followed his own, and discerned

The boast they implied.

He repeated, "And you?"

And, still watching Matilda, she answered, "I too."

And he thought, as with that word she left him, she sighed.

The next moment her place she resumed by the side

Of Matilda; and soon they shook hands at the gate

Of the self-same hotel.

XXX.

One depressed, one elate, The Duke and Lord Alfred again, through the glooms

Of the thick linden alley, returned to the Rooms.

His cigar each had lighted, a moment before,

At the inn, as they turned, arm-in-arm, from the door.

Emis cigars do not cheer a man's spirits, *experto*

(*Me miserum quoties!*) *crede Roberto.*

In silence, awhile, they walked onward.

At last

The Duke's thoughts to language half consciously passed.

LUVOIS.

Once more! yet once more!

ALFRED.

What?

LUVOIS.

We meet her, once more, The woman for whom we two mad men of yore

(Laugh, *mon cher Alfred*, laugh!) were about to destroy

Each the other!

ALFRED.

It is not with laughter that I Raise the ghost of that once troubled time. Say! can you Recall it with coolness and quietude now?

LUVOIS.

Now? yes! I, *mon cher*, am a true *Parisien*:

Now, the red revolution, the tocsin and then

The dance and the play. I am now at the play.

ALFRED.

At the play, are you now? Then perchance I now may

Presume, Duke, to ask you what ever until

Such a moment, I waited . . .

LUVOIS.

Oh! ask what you will.

*Franc jeu!* on the table my cards I spread out.

Ask!

ALFRED.

Duke, you were called to a meeting (no doubt

You remember it yet) with Lucile. It was night

When you went; and before you returned it was light.

We met: you accosted me then with a brow

Bright with triumph: your words (you remember them now?)

Were "Let us be friends!"

LUVOIS.

Well?

ALFRED.

How then, after these Can you and she meet as acquaintances?

LUVOIS.

What!

Did she not then, herself, the Comtesse de Nevers,

Solve your riddle to-night with those soft lips of hers?

ALFRED.

In our converse to-night we avoided  
the past.

But the question I ask should be  
answered at last:

By you, if you will; if you will not,  
by her.

LUVUOIS.

Indeed? but that question, milord,  
can it stir

Such an interest in you, if your  
passion be o'er?

ALFRED.

Yes. Esteem may remain, although  
love be no more.

Lucile asked me, this night, to my  
wife (understand

To *my wife!*) to present her. I  
did so. Her hand

Has clasped that of Matilda. We  
gentlemen owe

Respect to the name that is ours:  
and, if so, [respect.

To the woman that bears it a twofold  
Answer, Duc de Luvois! Did Lu-  
cile then reject

The proffer you made of your hand  
and your name?

Or did you on her love then relin-  
quish a claim

Urged before? I ask bluntly this  
question, because

My title to do so is clear by the laws  
That all gentlemen honor. Make  
only one sign

That you know of Lucile de Nevers  
ought, in fine,

For which, if your own virgin sister  
were by,

From Lucile you would shield her  
acquaintance, and I

And Matilda leave Ems on the mor-  
row.

XXXI.

The Duke

Hesitated and paused. He could  
tell, by the look

Of the man at his side, that he  
meant what he said,

And there flashed in a moment these  
thoughts through his head:

"Leave Ems! would that suit me?  
no! that were again

To mar all. And besides, if I do  
not explain,

She herself will . . . *et puis, il a  
raison; on est*

*Gentilhomme avant tout!*" He re-  
plied therefore,

"Nay!

Madame de Nevers had rejected  
me. I,

In those days, I was mad; and in  
some mad reply

I threatened the life of the rival to  
whom

That rejection was due, I was led  
to presume.

She feared for his life; and the let-  
ter which then

She wrote me. I showed you; we  
met: and again

My hand was refused, and my love  
was denied,

And the glance you mistook was the  
vizard which Pride

Lends to humiliation.

"And so," half in jest,

He went on, "in this best world,  
'tis all for the best;

You are wedded, (blessed English-  
man!) wedded to one

Whose past can be called into ques-  
tion by none:

And I (fickle Frenchman!) can still  
laugh to feel

I am lord of myself, and the Mode:  
and Lucile [and fair

Still shines from her pedestal, frigid  
As yon German moon o'er the lin-  
den-tops there! [truth

A Dian in marble that scorns any  
With the little love-gods, whom I

thank for us both,

While she smiles from her lonely  
Olympus apart,

That her arrows are marble as well  
as her heart.

Stay at Ems, Alfred Vargrave!"

## XXXII.

The Duke, with a smile,  
Turned and entered the Rooms  
which, thus talking, mean-  
while,  
They had reached.

## XXXIII.

Alfred Vargrave strode on (over-  
thrown  
Heart and mind!) in the darkness  
bewildered, alone:  
“And so,” to himself did he mutter,  
“and so  
’Twas to rescue my life, gentle  
spirit! and, oh,  
For this did I doubt her? . . . a light  
word — a look —  
The mistake of a moment! . . . for  
this I forsook —  
For this? Pardon, pardon, Lucile!  
O Lucile!”  
Thought and memory rang, like a  
funeral peal,  
Wearry changes on one dirge-like  
note through his brain,  
As he strayed down the darkness.

## XXXIV.

Re-entering again  
The Casino, the Duke smiled. He  
turned to roulette,  
And sat down, and played fast, and  
lost largely, and yet  
He still smiled: night deepened: he  
played his last number:  
Went home: and soon slept: and  
still smiled in his slumber.

## XXXV.

In his desolate Maxims, La Roche-  
foucauld wrote,  
“In the grief or mischance of a  
friend you may note,  
There is something which always  
gives pleasure.”  
Alas!  
That reflection fell short of the truth  
as it was.

La Rochefoucauld might have as  
truly set down, —  
“No misfortune, but what some one  
turns to his own  
Advantage its mischief: no sorrow,  
but of it [profit:  
There ever is somebody ready to  
No affliction without its stock-job-  
bers, who all  
Gamble, speculate, play on the rise  
and the fall  
Of another man’s heart, and make  
traffic in it.”  
Burn thy book, O La Rochefoucauld!  
Fool! one man’s wit  
All men’s selfishness how should it  
fathom?

O sage,  
Dost thou satirize Nature?  
She laughs at thy page.

## CANTO II.

## I.

COUSIN JOHN to COUSIN ALFRED.  
“LONDON, 18—.

“MY DEAR ALFRED:  
Your last letters put me in pain.  
This contempt of existence, this list-  
less disdain  
Of your own life, — its joys and its  
duties, — the deuce  
Take my wits if they find for it half  
an excuse!  
I wish that some Frenchman would  
shoot off your leg,  
And compel you to stump through  
the world on a peg.  
I wish that you had, like myself,  
(more’s the pity!)  
To sit seven hours on this cursed  
committee.  
I wish that you knew, sir, how salt  
is the bread  
Of another — (what is it that Dante  
has said?)  
And the trouble of othermen’s stairs.  
In a word,  
I wish fate had some real affliction  
conferred

<p>On your whimsical self, that, at  least, you had cause  For neglecting life's duties, and  damning its laws!  This pressure against all the pur-  pose of life,  This self-ebullition, and ferment,  and strife,  Betokened, I grant that it may be  in truth,  The richness and strength of the  new wine of youth.  But if, when the wine should have  mellowed with time,  Being bottled and binned, to a flavor  sublime  It retains the same acrid, incongru-  ous taste,  Why, the sooner to throw it away  that we haste  The better, I take it. And this vice  of snarling,  Self-love's little lapdog, the overfed  darling  Of a hypochondriacal fancy appears,  To my thinking, at least, in a man  of your years,  At the midnight of manhood with  plenty to do,  And every incentive for doing it  too, —  With the duties of life just suffi-  ciently pressing  For prayer, and of joys more than  most men for blessing;  With a pretty young wife, and a  pretty full purse, —  Like poltroonery, puerile truly, or  worse! [agree  I wish I could get you at least to  To take life as it is, and consider  with me,  If it be not all smiles, that it is not  all sneers;  It admits honest laughter, and needs  honest tears.  Do you think none have known but  yourself all the pain  Of hopes that retreat, and regrets  that remain?</p>	<p>And all the wide distance fate fixes,  no doubt,  'Twixt the life that's within, and the  life that's without?  What one of us finds the world just  as he likes?  Or gets what he wants when he  wants it? Or strikes  Without missing the thing that he  strikes at the first?  Or walks without stumbling? Or  quenches his thirst  At one draught? Bah! I tell you!  I, bachelor John,  Have had griefs of my own. But  what then? I push on  All the faster perchance that I yet  feel the pain [again.  Of my last fall, albeit I may stumble  God means every man to be happy,  be sure.  He sends us no sorrows that have  not some cure.  Our duty down here is to do, not to  know.  Live as though life were earnest, and  life will be so.  Let each moment, like Time's last  ambassador, come:  It will wait to deliver its message:  and some  Sort of answer it merits. It is not  the deed  A man does, but the way that he  does it, should plead  For the man's compensation in do-  ing it.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">“ Here,  My next neighbor's a man with  twelve thousand a year,  Who deems that life has not a pas-  time more pleasant  Than to follow a fox or to slaughter  a pheasant.  Yet this fellow goes through a con-  tested election,  Lives in London, and sits, like the  soul of dejection,  All the day through upon a commit-  tee, and late</p>
--	--

To the last, every night, through  
 the dreary debate,  
 As though he were getting each  
 speaker by heart,  
 Though amongst them he never  
 presumes to take part.  
 One asks himself why, without  
 murmur or question,  
 He foregoes all his tastes, and de-  
 stroys his digestion,  
 For a labor of which the result  
 seems so small.  
 'The man is ambitious,' you say.  
 Not at all.  
 He has just sense enough to be  
 fully aware  
 That he never can hope to be Pre-  
 mier, or share  
 The renown of a Tully;—or even  
 to hold [bold  
 A subordinate office. He is not so  
 As to fancy the House for ten min-  
 utes would bear  
 With patience his modest opinions  
 to hear.  
 'But he wants something!'  
 "What! with twelve thousand a  
 year?  
 What could Government give him  
 would be half so dear  
 To his heart as a walk with a dog  
 and a gun  
 Through his own pheasant woods,  
 or a capital run?  
 'No; but vanity fills out the empti-  
 est brain;  
 The man would be more than his  
 neighbors, 'tis plain;  
 And the drudgery drearily gone  
 through in town  
 Is more than repaid by provincial  
 renown.  
 Enough if some Marchioness, lively  
 and loose,  
 Shall have eyed him with passing  
 complaisance; the goose,  
 If the Fashion to him open one of  
 its doors,  
 As proud as a sultan, returns to his  
 boors.'

Wrong again! if you think so.  
 "For, *primo*; my friend  
 Is the head of a family known from  
 one end  
 Of his shire to the other, as the  
 oldest; and therefore  
 He despises fine lords and fine la-  
 dies. *He* care for  
 A peerage? no, truly! *Secondo*; he  
 rarely  
 Or never goes out; dines at Bella-  
 my's sparely,  
 And abhors what you call the gay  
 world.  
 "Then, I ask  
 What inspires, and consoles, such  
 a self-imposed task  
 As the life of this man, — but the  
 sense of its duty?  
 And I swear that the eyes of the  
 haughtiest beauty  
 Have never inspired in my soul that  
 intense,  
 Reverential, and loving, and abso-  
 lute sense [this man,  
 Of heartfelt admiration I feel for  
 As I see him beside me; — there,  
 wearing the wan  
 London daylight away, on his hum-  
 drum committee;  
 So unconscious of all that awakens  
 my pity,  
 And wonder — and worship, I might  
 say.  
 "To me  
 There seems something nobler than  
 genius to be [relieves,  
 In that dull patient labor no genius  
 That absence of all joy which yet  
 never grieves;  
 The humility of it! the grandeur  
 withal!  
 The sublimity of it! And yet,  
 should you call  
 The man's own very slow apprehen-  
 sions to this,  
 He would ask, with a stare, what  
 sublimity is!  
 His work is the duty to which he  
 was born;



He accepts it, without ostentation  
or scorn :

And this man is no uncommon type  
(I thank Heaven !)

Of this land's common men. In all  
other lands, even

The type's self is wanting. Per-  
chance, 'tis the reason

That Government oscillates ever  
'twixt treason

And tyranny elsewhere.

“I wander away  
Too far, though, from what I was  
wishing to say.

You, for instance, read Plato. You  
know that the soul

Is immortal; and put this in rhyme,  
on the whole,

Very well, with sublime illustration.  
Man's heart

Is a mystery, doubtless. You trace  
it in art :—

The Greek Psyche, — that's beauty,  
— the perfect ideal.

But then comes the imperfect, per-  
fectible real,

With its pained aspiration and  
strife. In those pale

Ill-drawn virgins of Giotto you see  
it prevail.

You have studied all this. Then,  
the universe, too,

Is not a mere house to be lived in,  
for you. [know

Geology opens the mind. So you  
Something also of strata and fos-

sils; these show  
The bases of cosmical structure :

some mention  
Of the nebulous theory demands  
your attention ;

And so on.

“In short, it is clear the interior  
Of your brain, my dear Alfred, is

vastly superior  
In fibre, and fulness, and function,

and fire, [squire ;  
To that of my poor parliamentary

But your life leaves upon me (for-  
give me this heat

Due to friendship) the sense of a  
thing incomplete.

You fly high. But what is it, in  
truth, you fly at?

My mind is not satisfied quite as to  
that.

An old illustration 's as good as a  
new, [true.

Provided the old illustration be  
We are children. Mere kites are

the fancies we fly,

Though we marvel to see them as-  
cending so high ;

Things slight in themselves, — long-  
tailed toys, and no more.

What is it that makes the kite  
steadily soar

Through the realms where the cloud  
and the whirlwind have birth

But the tie that attaches the kite to  
the earth?

I remember the lessons of child-  
hood, you see,

And the hornbook I learned on my  
poor mother's knee.

In truth, I suspect little else do we  
learn

From this great book of life, which  
so shrewdly we turn,

Saving how to apply, with a good  
or bad grace,

What we learned in the hornbook  
of childhood.

“Your case

Is exactly in point.

“Fly your kite, if you please,  
Out of sight : let it go where it will,

on the breeze ;  
But cut not the one thread by which

it is bound,  
Be it never so high, to this poor

human ground.  
No man is the absolute lord of his

life.  
You, my friend, have a home, and a  
sweet and dear wife.

If I often have sighed by my own  
silent fire,

With a sense of a sometimes recur-  
ring desire

For a voice sweet and low, or a face  
fond and fair,  
Some dull winter evening to solace  
and share

With the love which the world its  
good children allows

To shake hands with, — in short, a  
legitimate spouse,

This thought has consoled me: “At  
least I have given

For my own good behavior no host-  
age to heaven.”

You have, though. Forget it not!  
faith, if you do,

I would rather break stones on a  
road than be you.

If any man wilfully injured, or led  
That little girl wrong, I would sit  
on his head,

Even though you yourself were the  
sinner!

“And this

Leads me back (do not take it, dear  
cousin, amiss!)

To the matter I meant to have men-  
tioned at once,

But these thoughts put it out of my  
head for the nonce.

Of all the preposterous humbugs and  
shams, [lambs,

Of all the old wolves ever taken for  
The wolf best received by the flock  
he devours

Is that uncle-in-law, my dear Alfred,  
of yours.

At least, this has long been my set-  
tled conviction,

And I almost would venture at once  
the prediction

That before very long — but no mat-  
ter! I trust

For his sake and our own, that I  
may be unjust. [I am on

But Heaven forgive me, if cautious  
The score of such men as, with both  
God and Mammon,

Seem so shrewdly familiar.

“Neglect not this warning.

There were rumors afloat in the City  
this morning

Which I scarce like the sound of.  
Who knows? would he fleece  
At a pinch, the old hypocrite, even  
his own niece?

For the sake of Matilda I cannot im-  
portune

Your attention too early. If all your  
wife's fortune

Is yet in the hands of that specious  
old sinner,

Who would dice with the devil, and  
yet rise up winner,

I say, lose no time! get it out of the  
grab [McNab.

Of her trustee and uncle, Sir Ridley  
I trust those deposits, at least, are  
drawn out,

And safe at this moment from  
danger or doubt.

A wink is as good as a nod to the  
wise. [justifies

*Verbum sap.* I admit nothing yet  
My mistrust; but I have in my own  
mind a notion

That old Ridley's white waistcoat,  
and airs of devotion,

Have long been the only ostensible  
capital

On which he does business. If so,  
time must sap it all,

Sooner or later. Look sharp. Do  
not wait,

Draw at once. In a fortnight it may  
be too late.

I admit I know nothing. I can but  
suspect;

I give you my notions. Form yours  
and reflect.

My love to Matilda. Her mother  
looks well.

I saw her last week. I have noth-  
ing to tell

Worth your hearing. We think that  
the Government here

Will not last our next session. Fitz  
Funk is a peer,

You will see by the Times. There  
are symptoms which show

That the ministers now are prepar-  
ing to go,

And finish their feast of the loaves  
and the fishes.  
It is evident that they are clearing  
the dishes,  
And cramming their pockets with  
bon-bons. Your news  
Will be always acceptable. Vere, of  
the Blues,  
Has bolted with Lady Selina. And  
so,  
You have met with that hot-headed  
Frenchman? I know  
That the man is a sad *mauvais sujet*.  
Take care  
Of Matilda. I wish I could join you  
both there;  
But, before I am free, you are sure  
to be gone.  
Good-by, my dear fellow. Yours,  
anxiously,

“JOHN.”

II.

This is just the advice I myself would  
have given  
To Lord Alfred, had I been his  
cousin, which, Heaven  
Be praised, I am not. But it reached  
him indeed  
In an unlucky hour, and received lit-  
tle heed.  
A half-languid glance was the most  
that he lent at  
That time to these homilies. *Primum dementat*  
*Quem Deus vult perdere.* Alfred in  
fact  
Was behaving just then in a way to  
distract  
Job's self had Job known him. The  
more you'd have thought  
The Duke's court to Matilda his eye  
would have caught,  
The more did his aspect grow listless  
to hers  
And the more did it beam to Lucile  
de Nevers.  
And Matilda, the less she found love  
in the look

Of her husband, the less did she  
shrink from the Duke.  
With each day that passed o'er them,  
they each, heart from heart,  
Woke to feel themselves further and  
further apart.  
More and more of his time Alfred  
passed at the table;  
Played high; and lost more than to  
lose he was able.  
He grew feverish, querulous, absent,  
perverse, —  
And here I must mention, what  
made matters worse,  
That Lucile and the Duke at the self-  
same hotel  
With the Vargraves resided. It  
needs not to tell  
That they all saw too much of each  
other. The weather  
Was so fine that it brought them  
each day all together  
In the garden, to listen, of course,  
to the band. [and  
The house was a sort of phalanstery;  
Lucile and Matilda were pleased to  
discover  
A mutual passion for music. More-  
over,  
The Duke was an excellent tenor:  
could sing  
“*Ange si pure*” in a way to bring  
down on the wing  
All the angels St. Cicely played to.  
My lord  
Would also at times, when he was  
not too bored,  
Play Beethoven, and Wagner's new  
music, not ill:  
With some little things of his own,  
showing skill.  
For which reason, as well as for  
some others too,  
Their rooms were a pleasant enough  
rendezvous.  
Did Lucile, then, encourage (the  
heartless coquette!)  
All the mischief she could not but  
mark?

Patience yet!

## III.

In that garden, an arbor, withdrawn  
 from the sun,  
 By laburnum and lilac with blooms  
 overrun,  
 Formed a vault of cool verdure,  
 which made, when the heat  
 Of the noontide hung heavy, a gra-  
 cious retreat.  
 And here, with some friends of their  
 own little world,  
 In the warm afternoons, till the  
 shadows uncurled  
 From the feet of the lindens, and  
 crept through the grass,  
 Their blue hours would this gay little  
 colony pass.  
 The men loved to smoke, and the  
 women to bring,  
 Undeterred by tobacco, their work  
 there, and sing  
 Or converse, till the dew fell, and  
 homeward the bee  
 Floated, heavy with honey. Towards  
 eve there was tea  
 (A luxury due to Matilda), and ice,  
 Fruit, and coffee. ὦ Ἐσπερε, πάντα  
 φέρεις!  
 Such an evening it was, while Ma-  
 tilda presided  
 O'er the rustic arrangements thus  
 daily provided,  
 With the Duke, and a small German  
 Prince with a thick head,  
 And an old Russian Countess both  
 witty and wicked,  
 And two Austrian Colonels, — that  
 Alfred, who yet  
 Was lounging alone with his last  
 cigarette,  
 Saw Lucile de Nevers by herself  
 pacing slow  
 Neatly the shade of the cool linden-  
 trees to and fro,  
 And joining her, cried, "Thank the  
 good stars, we meet!  
 I have so much to say to you!"  
 "Yes? . . ." with her sweet  
 Serene voice, she replied to him . . .  
 "Yes? and I too

Was wishing, indeed, to say some-  
 what to you."

She was paler just then than her  
 wont was. The sound  
 Of her voice had within it a sadness  
 profound.

"You are ill?" he exclaimed.

"No!" she hurriedly said,  
 "No, no!"

"You alarm me!"

She drooped down her head.  
 "If your thoughts have of late  
 sought, or cared, to divine  
 The purpose of what has been pass-  
 ing in mine,  
 My farewell can scarcely alarm you."

ALFRED.

Lucile!

Your farewell! you go!

LUCILE.

Yes, Lord Alfred.

ALFRED.

Reveal

The cause of this sudden unkind-  
 -ness.

LUCILE.

Unkind?

ALFRED.

Yes! what else is this parting?

LUCILE.

No, no! are you blind?  
 Look into your own heart and home.  
 Can you see  
 No reason for this, save unkindness  
 in me?

Look into the eyes of your wife, —  
 those true eyes  
 Too pure and too honest in aught  
 to disguise  
 The sweet soul shining through  
 them.

ALFRED.

Lucile! (first and last  
 Be the word, if you will!) let me  
 speak of the past.

I know now, alas! though I know  
it too late,  
What passed at that meeting which  
settled my fate.  
Nay, nay, interrupt me not yet! let  
it be!  
I but say what is due to yourself,  
— due to me,  
And must say it.

He rushed incoherently on,  
Describing how, lately, the truth  
he had known,  
To explain how, and whence, he  
had wronged her before,  
All the complicate coil wound about  
him of yore.  
All the hopes that had flown with  
the faith that was fled,  
“And then, O Lucile, what was left  
me,” he said,  
“When my life was defrauded of  
you, but to take  
That life, as ’twas left, and endeavor  
to make  
Unobserved by another, the void  
which remained  
Unconcealed to myself? If I have  
not attained,  
I have striven. One word of un-  
kindness has never  
Passed my lips to Matilda. Her  
least wish has ever  
Received my submission. And if,  
of a truth,  
I have failed to renew what I felt  
in my youth,  
I at least have been loyal to what I  
*do* feel, [cile,  
Respect, duty, honor, affection. Lu-  
I speak not of love now, nor love’s  
long regret:  
I would not offend you, nor dare I  
forget  
The ties that are round me. But  
may there not be  
A friendship yet hallowed between  
you and me?  
May we not be yet friends, — friends  
the dearest?”

“Alas!”

She replied, “for one moment, per-  
chance, did it pass  
Through my own heart, that dream  
which forever hath brought  
To those who indulge it in innocent  
thought  
So fatal and evil a waking! But no.  
For in lives such as ours are, the  
Dream-tree would grow  
On the borders of Hades: beyond  
it, what lies?  
The wheel of Ixion, alas! and the  
cries  
Of the lost and tormented. De-  
parted, for us,  
Are the days when with innocence  
we could discuss  
Dreams like these. Fled, indeed,  
are the dreams of *my* life!  
O trust me, the best friend you have  
is your wife.  
And I, — in that pure child’s pure  
virtue, I bow  
To the beauty of virtue. I felt on  
my brow  
Not one blush when I first took her  
hand. With no blush  
Shall I clasp it to-night, when I  
leave you.

“Hush! hush!

I would say what I wished to have  
said when you came.  
Do not think that years leave us  
and find us the same!  
The woman you knew long ago,  
long ago,  
Is no more. You yourself have  
within you, I know,  
The germ of a joy in the years yet  
to be.  
Whereby the past years will bear  
fruit. As for me,  
I go my own way, — onward, upward!  
“O yet,  
Let me thank you for that which  
ennobled regret,  
When it came, as it beautified hope  
ere it fled, —  
The love I once felt for you. True,  
it is dead.

But it is not corrupted. I too have  
at last  
Lived to learn that love is not —  
(such love as is past,  
Such love as youth dreams of at  
least) — the sole part  
Of life, which is able to fill up the  
heart;  
Even that of a woman.

“Between you and me  
Heaven fixes a gulf, over which you  
must see  
That our guardian angels can bear  
us no more.

We each of us stand on an opposite  
shore.

Trust a woman's opinion for once.  
Women learn,

By an instinct men never attain, to  
discern

Each other's true natures. Matilda  
is fair,

Matilda is young — see her now, sit-  
ting there! —

How tenderly fashioned — (O, is she  
not? say,)

To love and be loved!”

IV.

He turned sharply away, —  
“Matilda is young, and Matilda is  
fair;

Of all that you tell me pray deem me  
aware;

But Matilda's a statue, Matilda's a  
child;

Matilda loves not —”

Lucile quietly smiled  
As she answered him: — “Yesterday,  
all that you say

Might be true; it is false, wholly  
false, though, to-day.”

“How? — what mean you?”

“I mean that to-day,” she re-  
plied,

“The statue with life has become  
vivified:

I mean that the child to a woman  
has grown:

And that woman is jealous.”

“What! she?” with a tone

Of ironical wonder, he answered —  
“what, she!

She jealous! — Matilda! — of whom,  
pray? — not me!”

“My lord, you deceive yourself; no  
one but you

Is she jealous of. Trust me. And  
thank Heaven, too,

That so lately this passion within  
her hath grown.

For who shall declare, if for months  
she had known

What for days she has known all too  
keenly, I fear,

That knowledge perchance might  
have cost you more dear?”

“Explain! explain, madam!” he  
cried in surprise;

And terror and anger enkindled his  
eyes.

“How blind are you men!” she re-  
plied. “Can you doubt

That a woman, young, fair, and neg-  
lected —”

“Speak out!”

He gasped with emotion. “Lucile!  
you mean — what?

Do you doubt her fidelity?”

“Certainly not.

Listen to me, my friend. What I  
wish to explain

Is so hard to shape forth. I could  
almost refrain

From touching a subject so fragile.  
However, [endeavor

Bear with me awhile, if I frankly  
To invade for one moment your in-  
nermost life.

Your honor, Lord Alfred, and that  
of your wife,

Are dear to me, — most dear! And  
I am convinced

That you rashly are risking that  
honor.”

He winced,

And turned pale, as she spoke.

She had aimed at his heart,  
And she saw, by his sudden and ter-  
rified start,

That her aim had not missed.

“Stay, Lucile!” he exclaimed,  
“What in truth do you mean by  
these words, vaguely framed  
To alarm me? Matilda?—My  
wife?—do you know?”—

“I know that your wife is as spot-  
less as snow.

But I know not how far your con-  
tinued neglect

Her nature, as well as her heart  
might affect.

Till at last, by degrees, that serene  
atmosphere

Of her unconscious purity, faint and  
yet clear,

Like the indistinct golden and vapor-  
ous fleece

Which surrounded and hid the celes-  
tials in Greece

From the glances of men, would dis-  
perse and depart

At the sighs of a sick and delirious  
heart,—

For jealousy is to a woman, be sure,  
A disease healed too oft by a crimi-  
nal cure;

And the heart left too long to its  
ravage, in time

May find weakness in virtue, reprisal  
in crime.”

V.

“Such thoughts could have never,”  
he faltered, “I know,

Reached the heart of Matilda.”  
“Matilda? O no!

But reflect! when such thoughts do  
not come of themselves

To the heart of a woman neglected,  
like elves

That seek lonely places,—there rare-  
ly is wanting

Some voice at her side, with an evil  
enchanting

To conjure them to her.”  
“O lady, beware!

At this moment, around me I search  
everywhere

For a clew to your words”—  
“You mistake them,” she said,

Half fearing, indeed, the effect they  
had made.

“I was putting a mere hypothetical  
case.”

With a long look of trouble he gazed  
in her face.

“Woe to him, . . .” he exclaimed  
. . . “woe to him that shall feel

Such a hope! for I swear, if he did  
but reveal

One glimpse,—it should be the last  
hope of his life!”

The clenched hand and bent eye-  
brow betokened the strife

She had roused in his heart.

“You forget,” she began,  
“That you menace yourself. You  
yourself are the man

That is guilty. Alas! must it ever  
be so?

Do we stand in our own light, wher-  
ever we go,

And fight our own shadows forever?  
O think!

The trial from which you, the  
stronger ones, shrink,

You ask woman, the weaker one,  
still to endure; [abjure;

You bid her be true to the laws you  
To abide by the ties you yourselves  
rend asunder,

With the force that has failed you;  
and that, too, when under

The assumption of rights which to  
her you refuse.

The immunity claimed for your-  
selves you abuse!

Where the contract exists, it in-  
volves obligation

To both husband and wife, in an  
equal relation.

You unloose, in asserting your own  
liberty.

A knot, which, unloosed, leaves  
another as free,

Then, O Alfred! be juster at heart!  
and thank Heaven

That Heaven to your wife such a  
nature has given

That you have not wherewith to  
reproach her, albeit  
You have cause to reproach your  
own self, could you see it!"

## VI.

In the silence that followed the last  
word she said,  
In the heave of his chest, and the  
droop of his head,  
Poor Lucile marked her words had  
sufficed to impart  
A new germ of motion and life to  
that heart  
Of which he himself had so recently  
spoken  
As dead to emotion, — exhausted, or  
broken!  
New fears would awaken new hopes  
in his life.  
In the husband indifferent no more  
to the wife  
She already, as she had foreseen,  
could discover  
That Matilda had gained, at her  
hands, a new lover.  
So after some moments of silence,  
whose spell  
They both felt, she extended her  
hand to him. . . .

## VII.

"Well?"

## VIII.

"Lucile," he replied, as that soft  
quiet hand  
In his own he clasped warmly, "I  
both understand  
And obey you."  
"Thank Heaven!" she murmured.  
"O yet,  
One word, I beseech you! I cannot  
forget."  
He exclaimed, "we are parting for  
life. You have shown  
My pathway to me: but say, what  
is your own?"  
The calmness with which until then  
she had spoken

In a moment seemed strangely and  
suddenly broken.  
She turned from him nervously,  
hurriedly.

"Nay,  
I know not," she murmured, "I  
follow the way  
Heaven leads me; I cannot foresee  
to what end.

I know only that far, far away it  
must tend  
From all places in which we have  
met, or might meet.

Far away! — onward — upward!"  
A smile strange and sweet  
As the incense that rises from some  
sacred cup

And mixes with music, stole forth,  
and breathed up  
Her whole face, with those words.

"Wheresoever it be,  
May all gentlest angels attend you!"  
sighed he,

"And bear my heart's blessing  
wherever you are!"  
And her hand, with emotion, he  
kissed.

## IX.

From afar  
That kiss was, alas! by Matilda be-  
held  
With far other emotions: her young  
bosom swelled,  
And her young cheek with anger  
was crimsoned.

The Duke  
Adroitly attracted towards it her  
look  
By a faint but significant smile.

## X.

Much ill-construed,  
Renowned Bishop Berkeley has ful-  
ly, for one, strewed  
With arguments page upon page to  
teach folks [a hoax.  
That the world they inhabit is only  
But it surely is hard, since we can't  
do without them,  
That our senses should make us so  
oft wish to doubt them!



## CANTO III.

## I.

WHEN first the red savage called  
 Man strode, a king,  
 Through the wilds of creation,—the  
 very first thing  
 That his naked intelligence taught  
 him to feel  
 Was the shame of himself; and the  
 wish to conceal  
 Was the first step in art. From the  
 apron which Eve  
 In Eden sat down out of fig-leaves  
 to weave,  
 To the furbelowed flounce and the  
 broad crinoline  
 Of my lady . . . you all know of  
 course whom I mean . . .  
 This art of concealment has greatly  
 increased.  
 A whole world lies cryptic in each  
 human breast;  
 And that drama of passions as old  
 as the hills,  
 Which the moral of all men in each  
 man fulfils,  
 Is only revealed now and then to  
 our eyes  
 In the newspaper-files and the courts  
 of assize.

## II.

In the group seen so lately in sun-  
 light assembled,  
 'Mid those walks over which the la-  
 burnum-bough trembled,  
 And the deep-bosomed lilac empara-  
 dising  
 The haunts where the blackbird and  
 thrush flit and sing,  
 The keenest eye could but have seen,  
 and seen only,  
 A circle of friends, minded not to  
 leave lonely  
 The bird on the bough, or the bee  
 on the blossom;  
 Conversing at ease in the garden's  
 green bosom,  
 Like those who, when Florence was  
 yet in her glories,

Cheated death and killed time with  
 Boccaccian stories.  
 But at length the long twilight more  
 deeply grew shaded,  
 And the fair night the rosy horizon  
 invaded.  
 And the bee in the blossom, the bird  
 on the bough,  
 Through the shadowy garden were  
 slumbering now,  
 The trees only, o'er every unvisited  
 walk, [talk.  
 Began on a sudden to whisper and  
 And, as each little sprightly and  
 garrulous leaf  
 Woke up with an evident sense of  
 relief,  
 They all seemed to be saying . . .  
 "Once more we're alone,  
 And, thank Heaven, those tiresome  
 people are gone!"

## III.

Through the deep blue concave of  
 the luminous air,  
 Large, loving, and languid, the stars  
 here and there,  
 Like the eyes of shy passionate wo-  
 men, looked down  
 O'er the dim world whose sole ten-  
 der light was their own,  
 When Matilda, alone, from her  
 chamber descended,  
 And entered the garden, unseen,  
 unattended.  
 Her forehead was aching and parch-  
 ed, and her breast  
 By a vague inexpressible sadness  
 oppressed;  
 A sadness which led her, she scarcely  
 knew how,  
 And she scarcely knew why . . .  
 (save, indeed, that just now  
 The house, out of which with a gasp  
 she had fled  
 Half-stiffed, seemed ready to sink  
 on her head) . . .  
 Out into the night air, the silence,  
 the bright  
 Boundless starlight, the cool isola-  
 tion of night!

Her husband that day had looked  
 once in her face,  
 And pressed both her hands in a  
 silent embrace,  
 And reproachfully noticed her re-  
 cent dejection  
 With a smile of kind wonder and  
 tacit affection.  
 He, of late so indifferent and listless!  
 . . . at last  
 Was he startled and awed by the  
 change which had passed  
 O'er the once radiant face of his  
 young wife? Whence came  
 That long look of solicitous fond-  
 ness? . . . the same  
 Look and language of quiet affection,  
 — the look  
 And the language, also! which so  
 often she took  
 For pure love in the simple repose  
 of its purity. — [security!  
 Her own heart thus lulled to a fatal  
 Ha! would he deceive her again by  
 this kindness?  
 Had she been, then, O fool! in her  
 innocent blindness  
 The sport of transparent illusion?  
 ah, folly!  
 And that feeling, so tranquil, so  
 happy, so holy,  
 She had taken, till then, in the  
 heart, not alone  
 Of her husband, but also, indeed, in  
 her own.  
 For true love, nothing else, after all,  
 did it prove  
 But a friendship profanely familiar?  
 “And love? . . .  
 What was love, then? . . . not calm,  
 not secure, — scarcely kind!  
 But in one, all intensest emotions  
 combined:  
 Life and death: pain and rapture.”  
 Thus wandering astray,  
 Led by doubt, through the darkness  
 she wandered away.  
 All silently crossing, recrossing the  
 night, [light,  
 With faint, meteoric, miraculous

The swift-shooting stars through the  
 infinite burned,  
 And into the infinite ever returned.  
 And silently o'er the obscure and  
 unknown  
 In the heart of Matilda there darted  
 and shone  
 Thoughts, enkindling like meteors  
 the deeps, to expire,  
 Leaving traces behind them of  
 tremulous fire.

## IV.

She entered that arbor of lilacs, in  
 which  
 The dark air with odors hung heavy  
 and rich,  
 Like a soul that grows faint with  
 desire.

## ’Twas the place

In which she so lately had sat, face  
 to face  
 With her husband, — and her, the  
 pale stranger detested,  
 Whose presence her heart like a  
 plague had infested.  
 The whole spot with evil remem-  
 brance was haunted.  
 Through the darkness there rose on  
 the heart which it daunted  
 Each dreary detail of that desolate  
 day,  
 So full, and yet so incomplete. Far  
 away  
 The acacias were muttering, like  
 mischievous elves,  
 The whole story over again to them-  
 selves,  
 Each word, — and each word was a  
 wound! By degrees  
 Her memory mingled its voice with  
 the trees.

## V.

Like the whisper Eve heard, when  
 she paused by the root  
 Of the sad tree of knowledge, and  
 gazed on its fruit,  
 To the heart of Matilda the trees  
 seemed to hiss  
 Wild instructions, revealing man’s  
 last right, which is

The right of reprisals.

An image uncertain,  
And vague, dimly shaped itself forth  
on the curtain  
Of the darkness around her. It  
came and it went;  
Through her senses a faint sense of  
peril it sent:  
It passed and repassed her; it went  
and it came  
Forever returning; forever the same;  
And forever more clearly defined;  
till her eyes  
In that outline obscure could at last  
recognize  
The man to whose image, the more  
and the more  
That her heart, now aroused from  
its calm sleep of yore,  
From her husband detached itself  
slowly, with pain,  
Her thoughts had returned, and re-  
turned to, again, [law, —  
As though by some secret indefinite  
The vigilant Frenchman, — Eugène  
de Luvois!

## VI.

A light sound behind her. She  
trembled. By some  
Night-witchcraft her vision a fact  
had become.  
On a sudden she felt, without turn-  
ing to view,  
That a man was approaching behind  
her. She knew  
By the fluttering pulse which she  
could not restrain,  
And the quick-beating heart, that  
this man was Eugène.  
Her first instinct was flight; but she  
felt her slight foot  
As heavy as though to the soil it had  
root.  
And the Duke's voice retained her,  
like fear in a dream.

## VII.

"Ah, lady! in life there are meet-  
ings which seem  
Like a fate. Dare I think like a  
sympathy too?"

Yet what else can I bless for this  
vision of you?

Alone with my thoughts, on this  
starlighted lawn,

By an instinct resistless, I felt my-  
self drawn

To revisit the memories left in the  
place

Where so lately this evening I look-  
ed in your face.

And I find, — you, yourself, — my  
own dream!

"Can there be

In this world one thought common  
to you and to me?

If so. . . . I, who deemed but a  
moment ago

My heart unaccompanied, save only  
by woe,

Should indeed be more blessed than  
I dare to believe —

Ah, but *one* word, but one from  
your lips to receive" . . .

Interrupting him quickly, she mur-  
mured, "I sought,

Here, a moment of solitude, silence,  
and thought,

Which I needed." . . .

"Lives solitude only for one?

Must its charm by my presence so  
soon be undone?

Ah, cannot two share it? What  
needs it for this? —

The same thought in both hearts, —  
be it sorrow or bliss;

If my heart be the reflex of yours,  
lady, — you.

Are you not yet alone, — even  
though we be two?"

"For that," . . . said Matilda. . .

"needs were, you should read

What I have in my heart." . . .

"Think you, lady, indeed,

You are yet of that age when a wo-  
man conceals

In her heart so completely whatever  
she feels

From the heart of the man whom it  
interests to know

And find out what that feeling may  
be? Ah, not so,

Lady Alfred! Forgive me that in  
it I look,

But I read in your heart as I read  
in a book."

"Well, Duke! and what read you  
within it? unless

It be, of a truth, a profound weariness,

And some sadness?"

"No doubt. To all facts there  
are laws.

The effect has its cause, and I  
mount to the cause."

VIII.

Matilda shrank back; for she suddenly  
found

That a finger was pressed on the yet  
bleeding wound

She herself had but that day perceived  
in her breast.

"You are sad," . . . said the Duke  
(and that finger yet pressed

With a cruel persistence the wound  
it made bleed) —

"You are sad, Lady Alfred, because  
the first need

Of a young and a beautiful woman  
is to be

Beloved, and to love. You are sad;  
for you see

That you are not beloved, as you  
deemed that you were:

You are sad: for that knowledge  
hath left you aware

That you have not yet loved, though  
you thought that you had.

Yes, yes! . . . you are sad — because  
knowledge is sad!"

He could not have read more profoundly  
her heart.

"What gave you," she cried, with  
a terrified start,

"Such strange power?" . . .

"To read in your thoughts?"  
he exclaimed,

"O lady, — a love, deep, profound,  
— be it blamed

Or rejected, — a love, true, intense,  
— such, at least,  
As you, and you only, could wake  
in my breast!"

"Hush, hush! . . . I beseech you  
. . . for pity!" she gasped,  
Snatching hurriedly from him the  
hand he had clasped  
In her effort instinctive to fly from  
the spot.

"For pity?" . . . he echoed, "for  
pity! and what  
Is the pity you owe him? his pity  
for you!

He, the lord of a life, fresh as new-  
fallen dew!

The guardian and guide of a woman,  
young, fair,  
And matchless! (whose happiness  
did he not swear

To cherish through life?) he neglects  
her — for whom?

For a fairer than she? No! the  
rose in the bloom

Of that beauty which, even when  
hidden, can prevail

To keep sleepless with song the  
aroused nightingale,

Is not fairer; for even in the pure  
world of flowers

Her symbol is not, and this poor  
world of ours

Has no second Matilda! For whom?  
Let that pass!

'Tis not I, 'tis not you, that can  
name her, alas!

And I dare not question or judge  
her. But why,

Why cherish the cause of your own  
misery?

Why think of one, lady, who thinks  
not of you?

Why be bound by a chain which  
himself he breaks through?

And why, since you have but to  
stretch forth your hand,

The love which you need and de-  
serve to command,

Why shrink? Why repel it?"

“O hush, sir! O hush!”  
 Cried Matilda, as though her whole  
 heart were one blush.  
 “Cease, cease, I conjure you, to  
 trouble my life!  
 Is not Alfred your friend? and am  
 • I not his wife?”

## IX.

“And have I not, lady,” he answered,  
 . . . “respected  
 His rights as a friend, till himself  
 he neglected  
 Your rights as a wife? Do you  
 think ’tis alone  
 For three days I have loved you?  
 My love may have grown  
 I admit, day by day, since I first  
 felt your eyes,  
 In watching their tears, and in  
 sounding your sighs.  
 But, O lady! I loved you before I  
 believed  
 That your eyes ever wept, or your  
 heart ever grieved.  
 Then I deemed you were happy — I  
 deemed you possessed  
 All the love you deserved, — and I  
 hid in my breast  
 My own love, till this hour — when  
 I could not but feel  
 Your grief gave me the right my  
 own grief to reveal!  
 I knew, years ago, of the singular  
 power  
 Which Lucile o’er your husband  
 possessed. Till the hour  
 In which he revealed it himself,  
 did I, — say! —  
 By a word, or a look, such a secret  
 betray?  
 No! no! do me justice. I never  
 have spoken  
 Of this poor heart of mine, till all  
 ties he had broken  
 Which bound *your* heart to him.  
 And now — now, that his love  
 For another hath left your own  
 heart free to rove,  
 What is it, — even now, — that I  
 kneel to implore you?

Only this, Lady Alfred! . . . to let  
 me adore you  
 Unblamed: to have confidence in  
 me: to spend  
 On me not one thought, save to  
 think me your friend.  
 Let me speak to you, — ah, let me  
 speak to you still!  
 Hush to silence my words in your  
 heart, if you will.  
 I ask no response: I ask only your  
 leave  
 To live yet in your life, and to  
 grieve when you grieve!”

## X.

“Leave me, leave me!” . . . she  
 gasped, with a voice thick  
 and low  
 From emotion. “For pity’s sake,  
 Duke, let me go!  
 I feel that to blame we should both  
 of us be,  
 Did I linger.”  
 “To blame? yes, no doubt!” . . .  
 answered he,  
 “If the love of your husband, in  
 bringing you peace,  
 Had forbidden you hope. But he  
 signs your release  
 By the hand of another. One mo-  
 ment! but one!  
 Who knows when, alas! I may see  
 you alone  
 As to-night I have seen you! or  
 when we may meet  
 As to-night we have met? when, en-  
 tranced at your feet,  
 As in this blessed hour, I may ever  
 avow  
 The thoughts which are pining for  
 utterance now!”  
 “Duke! Duke!” . . . she exclaimed  
 . . . “for heaven’s sake let  
 me go!  
 It is late. In the house they will  
 miss me, I know.  
 We must not be seen here together.  
 The night  
 Is advancing. I feel overwhelmed  
 with affright!

It is time to return to my lord."  
 "To your lord?"  
 He repeated, with lingering reproach  
 on the word,  
 "To your lord? do you think he  
 awaits you, in truth?  
 Is he anxiously missing your pres-  
 ence, forsooth?  
 Return to your lord! . . . his restraint  
 to renew?  
 And hinder the glances which are  
 not for you?  
 No, no! . . . at this moment his  
 looks seek the face  
 Of another! another is there in your  
 place! [ceives  
 Another consoles him! another re-  
 The soft speech which from silence  
 your absence relieves!"

## XI.

"You mistake sir!" . . . responded  
 a voice, calm, severe,  
 And sad, . . . "You mistake, sir!  
 that other is here."  
 Eugène and Matilda both started.  
 "Lucile!"  
 With a half-stifled scream, as she  
 felt herself reel  
 From the place where she stood,  
 cried Matilda.

"Ho, oh!

What! eaves-dropping, madam?"  
 . . . the Duke cried . . . "And  
 so  
 You were listening?"  
 "Say, rather," she said, "that I  
 heard,  
 Without wishing to hear it, that in-  
 famous word, —  
 Heard — and therefore reply."  
 "Belle Comtesse," said the Duke,  
 With concentrated wrath in the  
 savage rebuke.  
 Which betrayed that he felt himself  
 baffled . . . "you know  
 That your place is not *here*."  
 "Duke," she answered him slow,  
 "My place is wherever my duty is  
 clear;

And therefore my place, at this mo-  
 ment, is here.  
 O lady, this morning my place was  
 beside  
 Your husband, because (as she said  
 this she sighed)  
 I felt that from folly fast growing  
 to crime —  
 The crime of self-blindness—Heaven  
 yet spared me time  
 To save for the love of an innocent  
 wife  
 All that such love deserved in the  
 heart and the life  
 Of the man to whose heart and  
 whose life you alone  
 Can with safety confide the pure  
 trust of your own."

She turned to Matilda, and lightly  
 laid on her  
 Her soft, quiet hand . . .  
 "'Tis, O lady, the honor  
 Which that man has confided to  
 you, that, in spite  
 Of his friend, I now trust I may yet  
 save to-night —  
 Save for both of you, lady! for yours  
 I revere;  
 Duc de Luvois, what say you?—  
 my place is not here?"

## XII.

And, so saying, the hand of Matilda  
 she caught,  
 Wound one arm round her waist un-  
 resisted, and sought  
 Gently, softly, to draw her away  
 from the spot.  
 The Duke stood confounded, and  
 followed them not.  
 But not yet the house had they  
 reached when Lucile  
 Her tender and delicate burden could  
 feel  
 Sink and falter beside her. O, then  
 she knelt down,  
 Flung her arms round Matilda, and  
 pressed to her own  
 The poor bosom beating against her

The moon,  
Bright, breathless, and buoyant, and  
brimful of June,  
Floated up from the hillside, sloped  
over the vale,  
And poised herself loose in mid-  
heaven, with one pale,  
Minute, scintilless, and tremu-  
lous star  
Swinging under her globe like a  
wizard-lit car,  
Thus to each of those women reveal-  
ing the face  
Of the other. Each bore on her  
features the trace  
Of a vivid emotion. A deep inward  
shame  
The cheek of Matilda had flooded  
with flame. [cile  
With her enthusiastic emotion, Lu-  
Trembled visibly yet; for she could  
not but feel  
That a heavenly hand was upon her  
that night,  
And it touched her pure brow to a  
heavenly light.  
"In the name of your husband, dear  
lady," she said;  
"In the name of your mother, take  
heart! Lift your head,  
For those blushes are noble. Alas!  
do not trust  
To that maxim of virtue made ashes  
and dust,  
That the fault of the husband can  
cancel the wife's.  
Take heart! and take refuge and  
strength in your life's  
Pure silence,—there, kneel, pray,  
and hope, weep, and wait!"  
"Saved, Lucile!" sobbed Matilda,  
"but saved to what fate?  
Tears, prayers, yes! not hopes."  
"Hush!" the sweet voice replied.  
"Fooled away by a fancy, again to  
your side  
Must your husband return. Doubt  
not this. And return  
For the love you can give, with the  
love that you yearn

To receive, lady. What was it chilled  
you both now?  
Not the absence of love, but the ig-  
norance how  
Love is nourished by love. Well!  
henceforth you will prove  
Your heart worthy of love,—since it  
knows how to love."

## XIII.

"What gives you such power over  
me, that I feel  
Thus drawn to obey you? What are  
you, Lucile?"  
Sighed Matilda, and lifted her eyes  
to the face  
Of Lucile.  
There passed suddenly through it  
the trace  
Of deep sadness; and o'er that fair  
forehead came down  
A shadow which yet was too sweet  
for a frown.  
"The pupil of sorrow, perchance"  
... she replied.  
"Of sorrow?" Matilda exclaimed  
... "O confide  
To my heart your affliction. In all  
you made known  
I should find some instruction, no  
doubt, for my own!"

"And I some consolation, no doubt;  
for the tears  
Of another have not flowed for me  
many years."  
It was then that Matilda herself  
seized the hand  
Of Lucile in her own, and uplifted  
her; and  
Thus together they entered the house.

## XIV.

'Twas the room  
Of Matilda.  
The languid and delicate gloom  
Of a lamp of pure white alabaster,  
aloft  
From the ceiling suspended, around  
it slept soft.

The casement oped into the garden.

The pale

Cool: moonlight streamed through  
it. One lone nightingale  
Sung aloof in the laurels.

And here, side by side,  
Hand in hand, the two women sat  
down undescried,  
Save by guardian angels.

As, when, sparkling yet  
From the rain, that, with drops  
that are jewels, leaves wet  
The bright head it humbles, a young  
rose inclines  
To some pale lily near it, the fair  
vision shines

As one flower with two faces, in  
lushed, tearful speech,  
Like the showery whispers of flow-  
ers, each to each

Linked, and leaning together, so  
loving, so fair,  
So united, yet diverse, the two wo-  
men there

Looked, indeed, like two flowers  
upon one drooping stem,  
In the soft light that tenderly rested  
on them.

All that soul said to soul in that  
chamber, who knows?  
All that heart gained from heart?

Leave the lily, the rose,  
Undisturbed with their secret with-  
in them. For who  
To the heart of the floweret can  
follow the dew?

A night full of stars! O'er the si-  
lence, unseen,  
The footsteps of sentinel angels,  
between

The dark land and deep sky were  
moving. You heard  
Passed from earth up to heaven the  
happy watchword

Which brightened the stars as  
amongst them it fell  
From earth's heart, which it eased  
... "All is well! all is well!"

## CANTO IV.

### I.

THE Poets pour wine; and, when  
'tis new, all decry it,  
But, once let it be old, every trifler  
must try it.

And Polonius, who praises no wine  
that's not Massie,

Complains of my verse, that my  
verse is not classic.

And Miss Tilburina, who sings, and  
not badly,

My earlier verses, sighs "Common-  
place sadly!"

As for you, O Polonius, you vex me  
but slightly;

But you, Tilburina, your eyes beam  
so brightly

In despite of their languishing  
looks, on my word,

That to see you look cross I can  
scarcely afford.

Yes! the silliest woman that smiles  
on a bard

Better far than Longinus himself  
can reward

The appeal to her feelings of which  
she approves;

And the critics I most care to please  
are the Loves.

Alas, friend! what boots it, a stone  
at his head

And a brass on his breast,—when  
a man is once dead?

Ay! were fame the sole guerdon,  
poor guerdon were then

Theirs who, stripping life bare,  
stand forth models for men.

The reformer's?—a creed by pos-  
terity learnt

A century after its author is burnt!  
The poet's?—a laurel that hides  
the bald brow

It hath blighted! The painter's?—  
ask Raphael now

Which Madonna's authentic! The  
statesman's?—a name

For parties to blacken, or boys to  
declaim!



The soldier's? — three lines on the  
 cold Abbey pavement!  
 Were this all the life of the wise  
 and the brave meant,  
 All it ends in, thrice better, *Næra*,  
 it were  
 Unregarded to sport with thine  
 odorous hair,  
 Untroubled to lie at thy feet in the  
 shade  
 And be loved, while the roses yet  
 bloom overhead,  
 Than to sit by the lone hearth, and  
 think the long thought,  
 A severe, sad, blind schoolmaster,  
 envied for naught  
 Save the name of John Milton! For  
 all men, indeed,  
 Who in some choice edition may  
 graciously read, [note,  
 With fair illustration, an erudite  
 The song which the poet in bitter-  
 ness wrote,  
 Beat the poet, and notably beat him,  
 in this —  
 The joy of the genius is theirs,  
 whilst they miss  
 The grief of the man: Tasso's  
 song, — not his madness!  
 Dante's dreams, — not his waking  
 to exile and sadness!  
 Milton's music, — but not Milton's  
 blindness! . . .

Yet rise,

My Milton, and answer, with those  
 noble eyes  
 Which the glory of heaven hath  
 blinded to earth!  
 Say — the life, in the living it, savors  
 of worth:  
 That the deed, in the doing it,  
 reaches its aim:  
 That the fact has a value apart from  
 the fame:  
 That a deeper delight, in the mere  
 labor, pays  
 Scorn of lesser delights, and labori-  
 ous days:  
 And Shakespeare, though all Shake-  
 speare's writings were lost,

And his genius, though never a trace  
 of it crossed  
 Posterity's path, not the less would  
 have dwelt  
 In the isle with *Miranda*, with *Ham-  
 let* have felt  
 All that *Hamlet* hath uttered, and  
 haply where, pure  
 On its death-bed, wronged *Love* lay,  
 have moaned with the *Moor*!

## II.

When Lord *Alfred* that night to the  
 salon returned  
 He found it deserted. The lamp  
 dimly burned  
 As though half out of humor to  
 find itself there  
 Forced to light for no purpose a  
 room that was bare.  
 He sat down by the window alone.  
 Never yet  
 Did the heavens a lovelier evening  
 beget  
 Since *Latona's* bright childbed that  
 bore the new moon!  
 The dark world lay still, in a sort  
 of sweet swoon,  
 Wide open to heaven; and the stars  
 on the stream  
 Were trembling like eyes that are  
 loved on the dream  
 Of a lover; and all things were glad  
 and at rest  
 Save the unquiet heart in his own  
 troubled breast.  
 He endeavored to think, — an un-  
 wonted employment,  
 Which appeared to afford him no  
 sort of enjoyment.

## III.

“Withdraw into yourself. But, if  
 peace you seek there for,  
 Your reception, beforehand, be sure  
 to prepare for,”  
 Wrote the tutor of *Nero*; who  
 wrote, be it said,  
 Better far than he acted, — but  
 peace to the dead!

He bled for his pupil: what more  
 could he do?  
 But Lord Alfred, when into himself  
 he withdrew,  
 Found all there in disorder. For  
 more than an hour  
 He sat with his head drooped like  
 some stubborn flower  
 Beaten down by the rush of the  
 rain, — with such force  
 Did the thick, gushing thoughts  
 hold upon him the course  
 Of their sudden descent, rapid,  
 rushing, and dim,  
 From the cloud that had darkened  
 the evening for him.  
 At one moment he rose, — rose and  
 opened the door, [corridor  
 And wistfully looked down the dark  
 Toward the room of Matilda. Anon,  
 with a sigh [quietly  
 Of an incomplete purpose, he crept  
 Back again to his place in a sort of  
 submission  
 To doubt, and returned to his former  
 position, —  
 That loose fall of the arms, that  
 dull droop of the face,  
 And the eye vaguely fixed on impal-  
 pable space.  
 The dream, which till then had been  
 lulling his life,  
 As once Circe the winds, had sealed  
 thought; and his wife  
 And his home for a time he had  
 quite, like Ulysses,  
 Forgotten; but now o'er the trou-  
 bled abysses [forth leapt  
 Of the spirit within him, æolian,  
 To their freedom new-found, and  
 resistlessly swept  
 All his heart into tumult, the  
 thoughts which had been  
 Long pent up in their mystic re-  
 cesses unseen.

## IV.

How long he thus sat there, himself  
 he knew not,  
 Till he started, as though he were  
 suddenly shot,

To the sound of a voice too familiar  
 to doubt,  
 Which was making some noise in  
 the passage without.  
 A sound English voice, with a round  
 English accent,  
 Which the scared German echoes  
 resentfully back sent;  
 The complaint of a much disap-  
 pointed cab-driver  
 Mingled with it, demanding some  
 ultimate stiver:  
 Then, the heavy and hurried ap-  
 proach of a boot  
 Which revealed by its sound no di-  
 minutive foot:  
 And the door was flung suddenly  
 open, and on  
 The threshold Lord Alfred by bach-  
 elor John  
 Was seized in that sort of affection-  
 ate rage or  
 Frenzy of hugs which some stout  
 Ursa Major  
 On some lean Ursa Minor would  
 doubtless bestow  
 With a warmth for which only star-  
 vation and snow  
 Could render one grateful. As soon  
 as he could,  
 Lord Alfred contrived to escape,  
 nor be food  
 Any more for those somewhat vor-  
 acious embraces.  
 Then the two men sat down and  
 scanned each other's faces;  
 And Alfred could see that his cousin  
 was taken  
 With unwonted emotion. The hand  
 that had shaken  
 His own trembled somewhat. In  
 truth he desiered,  
 At a glance, something wrong.

## V.

“What's the matter?” he cried.  
 “What have you to tell me?”

JOHN.

What! have you not heard?

ALFRED.

Heard what?

- JOHN.  
This sad business—
- ALFRED.  
I? no, not a word.
- JOHN.  
You received my last letter?
- ALFRED.  
I think so. If not,  
What then?
- JOHN.  
You have acted upon it?
- ALFRED.  
On what?
- JOHN.  
The advice that I gave you—
- ALFRED.  
Advice?—let me see!  
You *always* are giving advice, Jack,  
to me.  
About Parliament was it?
- JOHN.  
Hang Parliament! no,  
The Bank, the Bank, Alfred!
- ALFRED.  
What Bank?
- JOHN.  
Heavens! I know  
You are careless;—but surely you  
have not forgotten,—  
Or neglected . . . I warned you the  
whole thing was rotten.  
You have drawn those deposits at  
least?
- ALFRED.  
No, I meant  
To have written to-day; but the  
note shall be sent  
To-morrow, however.
- JOHN.  
To-morrow? too late!  
Too late! O, what devil bewitched  
you to wait?
- ALFRED.  
Mercy save us! you don't mean to  
say . . .
- JOHN.  
Yes, I do.
- ALFRED.  
What! Sir Ridley? . . .
- JOHN.  
Smashed, broken, blown up, bolted,  
too!
- ALFRED.  
But his own niece? . . . In heav-  
en's name, Jack . . .
- JOHN.  
O, I told you  
The old hypocritical scoundrel  
would . . .
- ALFRED.  
Hold! you  
Surely can't mean we are ruined?
- JOHN.  
Sit down!  
A fortnight ago a report about town  
Made me most apprehensive. Alas,  
and alas!  
I at once wrote and warned you.  
Well, now let that pass.  
A run on the Bank about five days  
ago  
Confirmed my forebodings too terri-  
bly, though  
I drove down to the city at once:  
found the door  
Of the Bank close: the Bank had  
stopped payment at four.  
Next morning the failure was known  
to be fraud:  
Warrant out for MacNab; but Mac-  
Nab was abroad:  
Gone—we cannot tell where. I en-  
deavored to get  
Information: have learned nothing  
certain as yet,—  
Not even the way that old Ridley  
was gone:  
Or with those securities what he had  
done:

Or whether they had been already  
called out:  
If they are not, their fate is, I fear,  
past a doubt.  
Twenty families ruined, they say:  
what was left, —  
Unable to find any clew to the cleft  
The old fox ran to earth in, — but  
join you as fast  
As I could, my dear Alfred?\*

## VI.

He stopped here, aghast  
At the change in his cousin, the hue  
of whose face  
Had grown livid; and glassy his  
eyes fixed on space.  
“Courage, courage!” . . . said  
John, . . . “bear the blow like  
a man!”  
And he caught the cold hand of  
Lord Alfred. There ran  
Through that hand a quick tremor.  
“I bear it,” he said,  
“But Matilda? the blow is to her!”  
And his head  
Seemed forced down, as he said it.

## JOHN.

Matilda? Pooh, pooh!  
I half think I know the girl better  
than you.  
She has courage enough — and to  
spare. She cares less  
Than most women for luxury, non-  
sense, and dress.

## ALFRED.

The fault has been mine.

\* These events, it is needless to say, Mr. Morse, Took place when Bad News as yet travelled by horse. Ere the world, like a cockchafer, buzzed on a wire, Or Time was calmed by electrical fire; Ere a cable went under the hoary Atlantic. Or the word Telegram drove grammarians frantic.

## JOHN.

Be it yours to repair it,  
If you did not avert, you may help  
her to bear it.

## ALFRED.

I might have averted.

## JOHN.

Perhaps so. But now  
There is clearly no use in consider-  
ing how,  
Or whence, came the mischief. The  
mischief is here.  
Broken shins are not mended by  
crying, — that's clear!  
One has but to rub them, and get  
up again,  
And push on, — and not think too  
much of the pain.  
And at least it is much that you see  
that to her  
You owe too much to think of your-  
self. You must stir  
And arouse yourself, Alfred, for  
her sake. Who knows?  
Something yet may be saved from  
this wreck. I suppose  
We shall make him disgorge all he  
can, at the least.

“O Jack, I have been a brute idiot!  
a beast!  
A fool! I have sinned, and to *her*  
I have sinned!  
I have been heedless, blind, inex-  
cusably blind!  
And now, in a flash, I see all  
things!”

As though  
To shut out the vision, he bowed  
his head low  
On his hands; and the great tears  
in silence rolled on,  
And fell momentarily, heavily, one af-  
ter one.  
John felt no desire to find instant  
relief  
For the trouble he witnessed.

He guessed, in the grief  
Of his cousin, the broken and heart-  
felt admission

Of some error demanding a heartfelt  
contrition :

Some oblivion perchance which  
could plead less excuse

To the heart of a man re-aroused to  
the use

Of the conscience God gave him,  
than simply and merely

The neglect for which now he was  
paying so dearly.

So he rose without speaking, and  
paced up and down

The long room, much afflicted, in-  
deed, in his own

Cordial heart for Matilda.

Thus, silently lost  
In his anxious reflections, he crossed  
and recrossed

The place where his cousin yet  
hopelessly hung

O'er the table; his fingers entwisted  
among

The rich curls they were knotting  
and dragging: and there,

That sound of all sounds the most  
painful to hear,

The sobs of a man! Yet so far in  
his own

Kindly thoughts was he plunged,  
he already had grown

Unconscious of Alfred.

And so for a space  
There was silence between them.

VII.

At last, with sad face  
He stopped short, and bent on his  
cousin awhile

A pained sort of wistful, compas-  
sionate smile,

Approached him, — stood o'er him,  
— and suddenly laid

One hand on his shoulder —

“Where is she?” he said.  
Alfred lifted his face all disfigured  
with tears

And gazed vacantly at him, like one  
that appears

In some foreign language to hear  
himself greeted,

Unable to answer.

“Where is she?” repeated  
His cousin.

He motioned his hand to the door;  
“There, I think,” he replied. Cousin

John said no more,  
And appeared to relapse to his own

cogitations, [indications.  
Of which not a gesture vouchsafed

So again there was silence.  
A timepiece at last

Struck the twelve strokes of mid-  
night.

Roused by them, he cast  
A half-look to the dial; then quietly

threw  
His arm round the neck of his cou-  
sin, and drew

The hands down from his face.

“It is time she should know  
What has happened,” he said, . . .

“Let us go to her now.”  
Alfred started at once to his feet.

Drawn and wan  
Though his face, he looked more

than his wont was — a man.  
Strong for once, in his weakness,

Uplifted, filled through  
With a manly resolve.

If that axiom be true  
Of the “*Sum quia cogito*,” I must

opine  
That “*id sum quod cogito*”: — that

which, in fine,  
A man thinks and feels, with his

whole force of thought  
And feeling, the man is himself.

He had fought  
With himself, and rose up from his

self-overthrow  
The survivor of much which that

strife had laid low.  
At his feet, as he rose at the name

of his wife, [life  
Lay in ruins the brilliant unrealized

Which, though yet unfulfilled,  
seemed till then, in that name,

To be his, had he claimed it. The  
man's dream of fame

And of power fell shattered before  
him; and only

There rested the heart of the woman,  
 so lonely [her. The lord  
 In all save the love he could give  
 Of that heart he arose. Blush not,  
 Muse, to record  
 That his first thought, and last, at  
 that moment was not  
 Of the power and fame that seemed  
 lost to his lot,  
 But the love that was left to it;  
 not of the self  
 He had cared for, yet squandered;  
 and not of himself,  
 But of her; as he murmured,  
 "One moment, dear Jack!  
 We have grown up from boyhood  
 together. Our track  
 Has been through the same mead-  
 ows in childhood: in youth  
 Through the same silent gateways,  
 to manhood. In truth,  
 There is none that can know me as  
 you do; and none  
 To whom I more wish to believe  
 myself known.  
 Speak the truth; you are not wont  
 to mince it, I know.  
 Nor I, shall I shirk it, or shrink  
 from it now. [spite  
 In despite of a wanton behavior, in  
 Of vanity, folly, and pride, Jack,  
 which might  
 Have turned from me many a heart  
 strong and true  
 As your own, I have never turned  
 round and missed YOU  
 From my side in one hour of afflic-  
 tion or doubt  
 By my own blind and heedless self-  
 will brought about.  
 Tell me truth. Do I owe this alone  
 to the sake  
 Of those old recollections of boy-  
 hood that make  
 In your heart yet some clinging and  
 crying appeal  
 From a judgment more harsh, which  
 I cannot but feel  
 Might have sentenced our friendship  
 to death long ago?

Or is it . . . (I would I could deem  
 it were so!)  
 That, not all overlaid by a listless  
 exterior,  
 Your heart has divined in me some-  
 thing superior  
 To that which I seem; from my  
 innermost nature  
 Not wholly expelled by the world's  
 usurpature?  
 Some instinct of earnestness, truth,  
 or desire  
 For truth? Some one spark of the  
 soul's native fire  
 Moving under the ashes, and cin-  
 ders, and dust  
 Which life hath heaped o'er it?  
 Some one fact to trust  
 And to hope in? Or by you alone  
 am I deemed  
 The mere frivolous fool I so often  
 have seemed  
 To my own self?"

JOHN.

No Alfred! you will, I believe,  
 Be true, at the last, to what now  
 makes you grieve  
 For having belied your true nature  
 so long.  
 Necessity is a stern teacher. Be  
 strong!  
 "Do you think," he resumed . . .  
 "what I feel while I speak  
 Is no more than a transient emo-  
 tion, as weak  
 As these weak tears would seem to  
 betoken it?"

JOHN.

No!

ALFRED.

Thank you, cousin! your hand then  
 And now I will go  
 Alone, Jack. Trust to me.

VIII.

JOHN.

I do. But 'tis late.  
 If she sleeps, you'll not wake her.

ALFRED.

No, no! it will wait  
 (Poor infant!) too surely, this mis-  
 sion of sorrow;  
 If she sleeps, I will not mar her  
 dreams of to-morrow.  
 He opened the door, and passed out.  
 Cousin John  
 Watched him wistful, and left him  
 to seek her alone.

IX.

His heart beat so loud when he  
 knocked at her door,  
 He could hear no reply from within.  
 Yet once more  
 He knocked lightly. No answer.  
 The handle he tried:  
 The door opened: he entered the  
 room undescried.

X.

No brighter than is that dim circlet  
 of light  
 Which enhaloes the moon when rains  
 form on the night,  
 The pale lamp and indistinct radi-  
 ance shed  
 Round the chamber, in which at her  
 pure snowy bed  
 Matilda was kneeling; so wrapt in  
 deep prayer  
 That she knew not her husband  
 stood watching her there.  
 With the lamplight the moonlight  
 had mingled a faint  
 And unearthly effulgence which  
 seemed to acquaint  
 The whole place with a sense of  
 deep peace made secure  
 By the presence of something an-  
 gelic and pure.  
 And not purer some angel Grief  
 carves o'er the tomb  
 Where Love lies, than the lady that  
 kneeled in that gloom.  
 She had put off her dress; and she  
 looked to his eyes  
 Like a young soul escaped from its  
 earthly disguise;

Her fair neck and innocent shoul-  
 ders were bare,  
 And over them rippled her soft gold-  
 en hair;  
 Her simple and slender white bodice  
 unlaced  
 Confined not one curve of her deli-  
 cate waist.  
 As the light that, from water re-  
 flected, forever  
 Trembles up through the tremulous  
 reeds of a river,  
 So the beam of her beauty went  
 trembling in him,  
 Through the thoughts it suffused  
 with a sense soft and dim,  
 Reproducing itself in the broken  
 and bright [tions.  
 Lapse and pulse of a million emo-  
 That sight  
 Bowed his heart, bowed his knee.  
 Knowing scarce what he did,  
 To her side through the chamber he  
 silently slid,  
 And knelt down beside her, — and  
 prayed at her side.

XI.

Upstarting, she then for the first  
 time descried  
 That her husband was near her;  
 suffused with the blush  
 Which came o'er her soft pallid  
 cheek with a gush  
 Where the tears sparkled yet.  
 As a young fawn uncouches  
 Shy with fear, from the fern where  
 some hunter approaches,  
 She shrank back; he caught her,  
 and circling his arm  
 Round her waist, on her brow  
 pressed one kiss long and  
 warm.  
 Then her fear changed in impulse;  
 and hiding her face  
 On his breast, she hung locked in a  
 clinging embrace  
 With her soft arms wound heavily  
 round him, as though  
 She feared, if their clasp were re-  
 laxed, he would go:

Her smooth naked shoulders, un-  
 cared for, convulsed  
 By sob after sob, while her bosom  
 yet pulsed  
 In its pressure on his, as the effort  
 within it  
 Lived and died with each tender  
 tumultuous minute.  
 "O Alfred, O Alfred! forgive me,"  
 she cried, —  
 "Forgive me!"  
 "Forgive you, my poor child!"  
 he sighed;  
 "But I never have blamed you for  
 aught that I know,  
 And I have not one thought that  
 reproaches you now."  
 From her arms he unwound himself  
 gently. And so  
 He forced her down softly beside  
 him. Below  
 The canopy shading their couch,  
 they sat down.  
 And he said, clasping firmly her  
 hand in his own,  
 "When a proud man, Matilda, has  
 found out at length,  
 That he is but a child in the midst  
 of his strength,  
 But a fool in his wisdom, to whom  
 can he own  
 The weakness which thus to himself  
 hath been shown?  
 From whom seek the strength which  
 his need of is sore,  
 Although in his pride he might per-  
 ish, before  
 He could plead for the one, or the  
 other avow  
 'Mid his intimate friends? Wife of  
 mine, tell me now,  
 Do you join me in feeling, in that  
 darkened hour,  
 The sole friend that *can* have the  
 right or the power  
 To be at his side, is the woman that  
 shares [that bears  
 His fate, if he falter; the woman  
 The name dear for *her* sake, and  
 hallows the life

She has mingled her own with, —  
 in short, that man's wife!"  
 "Yes," murmured Matilda, "O  
 yes!"  
 "Then," he cried,  
 "This chamber in which we two sit,  
 side by side  
 (And his arm, as he spoke, seemed  
 more softly to press her),  
 Is now a confessional, — *you* my  
 confessor!"  
 "I?" she faltered, and timidly lifted  
 her head.  
 "Yes! but first answer one other  
 question," he said:  
 "When a woman once feels that she  
 is not alone;  
 That the heart of another is warmed  
 by her own;  
 That another feels with her what-  
 ever she feel, [in weal;  
 And halves her existence in woe or  
 That a man for her sake will, so  
 long as he lives,  
 Live to put forth his strength which  
 the thought of her gives;  
 Live to shield her from want, and  
 to share with her sorrow;  
 Live to solace the day, and provide  
 for the morrow;  
 Will that woman feel less than an-  
 other, O say,  
 The loss of what life, sparing this,  
 takes away?  
 Will she feel (feeling this), when  
 calamities come,  
 That they brighten the heart, though  
 they darken the home?"  
 She turned, like a soft rainy heaven,  
 on him  
 Eyes that smiled through fresh tears,  
 trustful, tender, and dim.  
 "That woman," she murmured,  
 "indeed were thrice blest!"  
 "Then courage, true wife of my  
 heart!" to his breast  
 As he folded and gathered her  
 closely, he cried.  
 "For the refuge, to-night in these  
 arms opened wide



To your heart, can be never closed  
to it again,  
And this room is for both an asylum!  
For when  
I passed through that door, at the  
door I left there [bear.  
A calamity, sudden, and heavy to  
One step from that threshold, and  
daily, I fear,  
We must face it henceforth: but it  
enters not here,  
For that door shuts it out, and  
admits here alone  
A heart which calamity leaves all  
your own!"

She started. . . "Calamity, Alfred!  
to you?"

"To both, my poor child, but 'twill  
bring with it too  
The courage, I trust, to subdue it."  
"O speak!  
Speak!" she faltered in tones timid,  
anxious, and weak.

"O yet for a moment," he said,  
"hear me on!" [the sun,  
Matilda, this morn we went forth in  
Like those children of sunshine, the  
bright summer flies,  
That sport in the sunbeam, and play  
through the skies  
While the skies smile, and heed not  
each other: at last,  
When their sunbeam is gone, and  
their sky overcast,  
Who recks in what ruin they fold  
their wet wings?  
So indeed the morn found us,—poor  
frivolous things!  
Now our sky is o'ercast, and our  
sunbeam is set,  
And the night brings its darkness  
around us. O, yet,  
Have we weathered no storm through  
those twelve cloudless hours?  
Yes; you, too, have wept!  
"While the world was yet ours,  
While its sun was upon us, its in-  
cense streamed to us,  
And its myriad voices of joy seemed  
to woo us,

We strayed from each other, too far,  
it may be, [I see,  
Nor, wantonly wandering, then did  
How deep was my need of thee,  
dearest, how great  
Was thy claim on my heart and thy  
share in my fate!  
But, Matilda, an angel was near us,  
meanwhile,  
Watching o'er us, to warn, and to  
rescue!

"That smile  
Which you saw with suspicion, that  
presence you eyed  
With resentment, an angel's they  
were at your side  
And at mine; nor perchance is the  
day all so far,  
When we both in our prayers, when  
most heartfelt they are,  
May murmur the name of that wo-  
man now gone  
From our sight evermore.  
"Here, this evening, alone,  
I seek your forgiveness, in opening  
my heart  
Unto yours, — from this clasp be it  
never to part! [is gone,  
Matilda, the fortune you brought me  
But a prize richer far than that for-  
tune has won  
It is yours to confer, and I kneel for  
that prize,  
'Tis the heart of my wife!" With  
suffused happy eyes  
She sprang from her seat, flung her  
arms wide apart,  
And tenderly closing them round  
him, his heart  
Clasped in one close embrace to her  
bosom; and there  
Drooped her head on his shoulder  
and sobbed.

Not despair,  
Not sorrow, not even the sense of  
her loss,  
Flowed in those happy tears, so ob-  
livious was she  
Of all save the sense of her own  
love! Anon,

However, his words rushed back to her. "All gone, The fortune you brought me!"

And eyes that were dim With soft tears she upraised: but those tears were for *him*.

"Gone! my husband?" she said, "tell me all! see! I need, To sober this rapture, so selfish indeed, Fuller sense of affliction."

"Poor innocent child!" He kissed her fair forehead, and mournfully smiled, As he told her the tale he had heard, — something more The gain found in loss of what gain lost of yore.

"Rest, my heart, and my brain, and my right hand for you; And with these, my Matilda, what may I not do?"

You know not, I knew not myself till this hour, Which so sternly revealed it, my nature's full power."

"And I too," she murmured, "I too am no more The mere infant at heart you have known me before.

I have suffered since then. I have learned much in life.

O take, with the faith I have pledged as a wife, [to feel! The heart I have learned as a woman For I—love you, my husband!"

As though to conceal Less from him, than herself, what that motion expressed, She dropped her bright head, and hid all on his breast. [wife!

"O lovely as woman, beloved as Evening star of my heart, light forever my life!

If from eyes fixed too long on this base earth thus far

You have missed your due homage, dear guardian star,

Believe that, uplifting those eyes unto heaven,

There I see you, and know you, and bless the light given To lead me to life's late achievement: my own, My blessing, my treasure, my all things in one!

## XII.

How lovely she looked in the lovely moonlight,

That streamed through the pane from the blue balmy night!

How lovely she looked in her own lovely youth,

As she clung to his side full of trust, and of truth!

How lovely to *him* as he tenderly pressed

Her young head on his bosom, and sadly caressed

The glittering tresses which now shaken loose

Showered gold in his hand, as he smoothed them!

## XIII.

O Muse,

Interpose not one pulse of thine own beating heart

'Twixt these two silent souls! There's a joy beyond art,

And beyond sound the music it makes in the breast.

## XIV.

Here were lovers twice wed, that were happy at least!

No music, save such as the nightingales sung,

Breathed their bridal abroad; and no cresset, uplung,

Lit that festival hour, save what soft light was given

From the pure stars that peopled the deep-purple heaven.

He opened the casement: he led her with him,

Hushed in heart, to the terrace, dipped cool in the dim

Lustrous gloom of the shadowy laurels. They heard

Aloof the invisible, rapturous bird,

With her wild note bewildering the  
 woodlands: they saw  
 Not unheard, afar off, the hill-rivulet  
 draw  
 His long ripple of moon-kindled  
 wavelets with cheer  
 From the throat of the vale; o'er  
 the dark-sapphire sphere  
 The mild, multitudinous lights lay  
 asleep,  
 Pastured free on the midnight, and  
 bright as the sheep  
 Of Apollo in pastoral Thrace; from  
 unknown  
 Hollow glooms freshened odors  
 around them were blown  
 Intermittingly; then the moon  
 dropped from their sight,  
 Immersed in the mountains, and put  
 out the light  
 Which no longer they needed to  
 read on the face  
 Of each other's life's last revelation.  
 The place  
 Slept sumptuous round them; and  
 Nature, that never  
 Sleeps, but waking reposes, with  
 patient endeavor  
 Continued about them, unheeded,  
 unseen, [green  
 Her old, quiet toil in the heart of the  
 Summer silence, preparing new buds  
 for new blossoms,  
 And stealing a finger of change o'er  
 the bosoms  
 Of the unconscious woodlands; and  
 Time, that halts not  
 His forces, how lovely soever the  
 spot  
 Where their march lies, — the wary,  
 gray strategist, Time,  
 With the armies of Life, lay en-  
 camped, — Grief and Crime,  
 Love and Faith, in the darkness un-  
 heeded; maturing,  
 For his great war with man, new  
 surprises; securing  
 All outlets, pursuing and pushing  
 his foe [grave.  
 To his last narrow refuge, — the

xv.

Sweetly though  
 Smiled the stars like new hopes out  
 of heaven, and sweetly  
 Their hearts beat thanksgiving for  
 all things, completely  
 Confiding in that yet untrodden ex-  
 istence  
 Over which they were pausing. To-  
 morrow, resistance  
 And struggle; to-night, Love his  
 hallowed device  
 Hung forth, and proclaimed his  
 serene armistice.

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 CANTO V.

I.

WHEN Lucile left Matilda, she sat  
 for long hours  
 In her chamber, fatigued by long  
 overwrought powers,  
 'Mid the signs of departure, about  
 to turn back  
 To her old vacant life, on her old  
 homeless track.  
 She felt her heart falter within her.  
 She sat  
 Like some poor player, gazing de-  
 jectedly at  
 The insignia of royalty worn for a  
 night;  
 Exhausted, fatigued, with the dazzle  
 and light,  
 And the effort of passionate feign-  
 ing; who thinks  
 Of her own meagre, rush-lighted  
 garret, and shrinks  
 From the chill of the change that  
 awaits her.

II.

From these  
 Oppressive, and comfortless, blank  
 reveries,  
 Unable to sleep, she descended the  
 stair  
 That led from her room to the gar-  
 den.

The air,  
 With the chill of the dawn, yet un-  
 risen, but at hand,  
 Strangely smote on her feverish  
 forehead. The land  
 Lay in darkness and change, like a  
 world in its grave:  
 No sound, save the voice of the long  
 river wave, [night!  
 And the crickets that sing all the  
 She stood still,  
 Vaguely watching the thin cloud that  
 curled on the hill.

Emotions, long pent in her breast,  
 were at stir,  
 And the deeps of the spirit were  
 troubled in her.  
 Ah, pale woman! what, with that  
 heart-broken look,  
 Didst thou read then in nature's  
 weird heart-breaking book?  
 Have the wild rains of heaven a  
 father? and who  
 Hath in pity begotten the drops of  
 the dew? [both?

Orion, Arcturus, who pilots them  
 What leads forth in his season the  
 bright Mazaroth?  
 Hath the darkness a dwelling, —  
 save there, in those eyes?  
 And what name hath that half-re-  
 vealed hope in the skies?  
 Ay, question, and listen! What an-  
 swer?

The sound  
 Of the long river wave through its  
 stone-troubled bound,  
 And the crickets that sing all the  
 night.

There are hours  
 Which belong to unknown, super-  
 natural powers,  
 Whose sudden and solemn sugges-  
 tions are all  
 That to this race of worms — sting-  
 ing creatures, that crawl,  
 Lie, and fear, and die daily, beneath  
 their own stings —  
 Can excuse the blind boast of inher-  
 ited wings.

When the soul, on the impulse of  
 anguish, hath passed  
 Beyond anguish, and risen into rap-  
 ture at last;

When she traverses nature and  
 space, till she stands  
 In the Chamber of Fate; where,  
 through tremulous hands,  
 Hum the threads from an old-fash-  
 ioned distaff uncurled,  
 And those three blind old women  
 sit spinning the world.

## III.

The dark was blanched wan, over-  
 head. One green star  
 Was slipping from sight in the pale  
 void afar;  
 The spirits of change, and of awe,  
 with faint breath  
 Were shifting the midnight, above  
 and beneath.  
 The spirits of awe and of change  
 were around,  
 And about, and upon her.

A dull muffled sound,  
 And a hand on her hand, like a  
 ghostly surprise,  
 And she felt herself fixed by the hot  
 hollow eyes  
 Of the Frenchman before her: those  
 eyes seemed to burn,  
 And scorch out the darkness be-  
 tween them, and turn  
 Into fire as they fixed her. He looked  
 like the shade

Of a creature by fancy from solitude  
 made,  
 And sent forth by the darkness to  
 scare and oppress  
 Some soul of a monk in a waste  
 wilderness.

## IV.

“At last, then, — at last, and alone,  
 — I and thou,  
 Lucile de Nevers, have we met?  
 “Hush! I know  
 Not for me was the tryst. Never  
 mind! it is mine;  
 And whatever led hither those proud  
 steps of thine,

They remove not, until we have  
spoken. My hour  
Is come; and it holds thee and me  
in its power,  
As the darkness holds both the  
horizons. 'Tis well!  
The timidest maiden that e'er to  
the spell  
Of her first lover's vows listened,  
hushed with delight,  
When soft stars were brightly up-  
hanging the night,  
Never listened, I swear, more un-  
questioningly  
Than thy fate hath compelled thee  
to listen to me!"

To the sound of his voice, as though  
out of a dream,  
She appeared with a start to awaken.  
The stream,  
When he ceased, took the night with  
its moaning again,  
Like the voices of spirits depart-  
ing in pain.

"Continue," she answered, "I lis-  
ten to hear."

For a moment he did not reply.  
Through the drear  
And dim light between them, she  
saw that his face  
Was disturbed. To and fro he con-  
tinued to pace,  
With his arms folded close, and the  
low restless stride  
Of a panther, in circles around her,  
first wide, [At last  
Then narrower, nearer, and quicker.  
He stood still, and one long look  
upon her he cast.

"Lucile, dost thou dare to look  
into my face?  
Is the sight so repugnant? ha, well!  
Canst thou trace  
One word of thy writing in this  
wicked scroll,  
With thine own name scrawled  
through it, defacing a soul?"

In his face there was something so  
wrathful and wild,  
That the sight of it scared her.

He saw it, and smiled,  
And then turned him from her, re-  
newing again  
That short, restless stride; as  
though searching in vain  
For the point of some purpose  
within him.

"Lucile,  
You shudder to look in my face:  
do you feel  
No reproach when you look in your  
own heart?"

"No, Duke,  
In my conscience I do not deserve  
your rebuke:  
Not yours!" she replied.

"No," he muttered again,  
"Gentle justice! you first bid Life  
hope not, and then  
To Despair you say, 'Act not!'"

V.

He watched her awhile  
With a chill sort of restless and  
suffering smile.

They stood by the wall of the gar-  
den. The skies,

Dark, sombre, were troubled with  
vague prophecies

Of the dawn yet far distant. The  
moon had long set,

And all in a glimmering light, pale,  
and wet

With the night-dews, the white roses  
sullenly loomed

Round about her. She spoke not.  
At length he resumed.

"Wretched creatures we are! I and  
thou,—one and all!

Only able to injure each other, and  
fall

Soon or late, in that void which  
ourselves we prepare

For the souls that we boast of  
weak insects we are!

O heaven! and what has become of  
them? all

Those instincts of Eden surviving  
the Fall:

That glorious faith in inherited  
things:

That sense in the soul of the length  
 of her wings;  
 Gone! all gone! and the wail of the  
 night-wind sounds human,  
 Bewailing those once nightly visitants!  
 Woman,  
 Woman, what hast thou done with  
 my youth? Give again,  
 Give me back the young heart that  
 I gave thee . . . in vain.”

“Duke!” she faltered.

“Yes, yes!” he went on, “I was  
 not

Always thus! what I once was, I  
 have not forgot.”

VI.

As the wind that heaps sand in a  
 desert, there stirred  
 Through his voice an emotion that  
 swept every word

Into one angry wail; as, with feverish  
 change,

He continued his monologue, fitful  
 and strange,

“Woe to him, in whose nature,  
 once kindled, the torch

Of Passion burns downward to  
 blacken and seorch!

But shame, shame and sorrow, O  
 woman, to thee

Whose hand sowed the seed of destruction  
 in me!

Whose lip taught the lesson of falsehood  
 to mine!

Whose looks made me doubt lies  
 that looked so divine!

My soul by thy beauty was slain in  
 its sleep:

And if tears I mistrust, 'tis that  
 thou too canst weep!

Well! . . . how utter soever it be,  
 one mistake

In the love of a man, what more  
 change need it make

In the steps of his soul through the  
 course love began,

Than all other mistakes in the life  
 of a man?

And I said to myself, ‘I am young  
 yet: too young

To have wholly survived my own  
 portion among

The great needs of man's life, or  
 exhausted its joys;

What is broken? one only of youth's  
 pleasant toys;

Shall I be the less welcome, where-  
 ever I go,

For one passion survived? No! the  
 roses will blow

As of yore, as of yore will the  
 nightingales sing,

Not less sweetly for one blossom  
 cancelled from Spring!

Hast thou loved, O my heart? to  
 thy love yet remains

All the wide loving-kindness of nature.  
 The plains

And the hills with each summer  
 their verdure renew.

Wouldst thou be as they are? do  
 thou then as they do,

Let the dead sleep in peace. Would  
 the living divine

Where they slumber? Let only new  
 flowers be the sign!

“Vain! all vain! . . . For when,  
 laughing, the wine I would  
 quaff, [to laugh.

I remembered too well all it cost me  
 Through the revel it was but the  
 old song I heard,

Through the crowd the old footsteps  
 behind me they stirred,

In the night-wind, the starlight, the  
 murmurs of even,

In the ardors of earth, and the languors  
 of heaven,

I could trace nothing more, nothing  
 more through the spheres,

But the sound of old sobs, and the  
 tracks of old tears!

It was with me the night long in  
 dreaming or waking,

It abided in loathing, when daylight  
 was breaking,

The burden of the bitterness in me!  
 Behold,

All my days were become as a tale  
 that is told.

And I said to my sight, 'No good thing shalt thou see,  
For the noonday is turned to darkness in me.  
In the house of Oblivion my bed I have made.'  
And I said to the grave, 'Lo, my father!' and said  
To the worm, 'Lo, my sister!' The dust to the dust,  
And one end to the wicked shall be with the just!"

## VII.

He ceased, as a wind that wails out on the night,  
And moans itself mute. Through the indistinct light  
A voice clear, and tender, and pure with a tone  
Of ineffable pity replied to his own.  
"And say you, and deem you, that I wrecked your life?  
Alas! Duc de Luvois, had I been your wife  
By a fraud of the heart which could yield you alone  
For the love in your nature a lie in my own,  
Should I not, in deceiving, have injured you worse?  
Yes, I then should have merited justly your curse,  
For I then should have wronged you!"

"Wronged! ah, is it so?  
You could never have loved me?"

"Duke!"

"Never? O no!"

(He broke into a fierce, angry laugh, as he said)

"Yet, lady, you knew that I loved you: you led

My love on to lay to its heart, hour by hour,

All the pale, cruel, beautiful, passionless power

Shut up in that cold face of yours! was this well?

But enough, not on you would I vent the wild hell

Which has grown in my heart. O that man, first and last  
He tramples in triumph my life! he has cast

His shadow 'twixt me and the sun . . . let it pass!

My hate yet may find him!"

She murmured, "Alas!

These words, at least, spare me the pain of reply.

Enough, Duc de Luvois! farewell. I shall try [every sight

To forget every word I have heard, That has grieved and appalled me in this wretched night

Which must witness our final farewell. May you, Duke,

Never know greater cause your own heart to rebuke

Than mine thus to wrong and afflict you have had!

Adieu!"

"Stay, Lucile, stay!" . . . he groaned, . . . "I am mad, Brutalized, blind with pain! I know not what I said.

I meant it not. But" (he moaned, drooping his head)

"Forgive me! I—have I so wronged you Lucile?

I . . . have I . . . forgive me, forgive me!"

"I feel

Only sad, very sad to the soul," she said, "far,

Far too sad for resentment."

"Yet stand as you are

One moment," he murmured. "I think, could I gaze

Thus awhile on your face, the old innocent days

Would come back upon me, and this scorching heart [not depart

Free itself in hot tears. Do not, do Thus, Lucile! stay one moment. I

know why you shrink, Why you shudder; I read in your face what you think.

Do not speak to me of it. And yet, if you will,

Whatever you say, my own lips shall  
be still.

I lied. And the truth, now, could  
justify naught.

There are battles, it may be, in  
which to have fought

Is more shameful than, simply, to  
fail. Yet, Lucile,

Had you helped me to bear what you  
forced me to feel—”

“Could I help you,” she murmured,  
“but what can I say

That your life will respond to?”  
“My life?” he sighed. “Nay,

My life hath brought forth only  
evil, and there

The wild wind hath planted the  
wild weed: yet ere

You exclaim, ‘Fling the weed to the  
flames,’ think again

Why the field is so barren. With all  
other men [only goes

First love, though it perish from life,  
Like the primrose that falls to make  
way for the rose.

For a man, at least most men, may  
love on through life:

Love in fame; love in knowledge;  
in work: earth is rife

With labor, and therefore with love,  
for a man. [and the plan

If one love fails, another succeeds,  
Of man’s life includes love in all  
objects! but I?

All such loves from my life through  
its whole destiny.

Fate excluded. The love that I gave  
you, alas!

Was the sole love that life gave to  
me. Let that pass!

It perished, and all perished with it.  
Ambition?

Wealth left nothing to add to my  
social condition.

Fame? But fame in itself presup-  
poses some great

Field wherein to pursue and attain  
it. The State?

I, to cringe to an upstart? The  
Camp? I, to draw

From its sheath the old sword of  
the Dukes of Luvois

To defend usurpation? Books,  
then? Science, Art?

But, alas! I was fashioned for ac-  
tion: my heart,

Withered though it be, I  
should hardly compress

’Twi’x the leaves of a treatise on  
Statics: life’s stress

Needs scope, not contraction! what  
rests? to wear out

At some dark northern court an ex-  
istence, no doubt,

In wretched and paltry intrigues  
for a cause

As hopeless as is my own life! By  
the laws [dispute,

Of a fate I can neither control nor  
I am what I am!”

#### VIII.

For a while she was mute.  
Then she answered, “We are our

own fates. Our own deeds  
Are our doomsmen. Man’s life was

made not for men’s creeds,  
But men’s actions. And, Duc de

Luvois, I might say  
That all life attests, that ‘the will

makes the way.’  
Is the land of our birth less the

land of our birth,  
Or its claim the less strong, or its  
cause the less worth

Our upholding, because the white  
lily no more

Is as sacred as all that it bloomed  
for of yore?

Yet be that as it may be; I cannot  
perchance

Judge this matter. I am but a  
woman, and France

Has for me simpler duties. Large  
hope, though, Eugène

De Luvois, should be yours. There  
is purpose in pain,

Otherwise it were devilish. I trust  
in my soul

That the great master hand which  
sweeps over the whole



Of this deep harp of life, if at moments it stretch  
 To shrill tension some one wailing nerve, means to fetch  
 Its response the truest, most stringent, and smart,  
 Its pathos the purest, from out the wrung heart, [less  
 Whose faculties, flaccid it may be, if Sharply strung, sharply smitten, had failed to express  
 Just the one note the great final harmony needs.  
 And what best proves there's life in a heart? — that it bleeds!  
 Grant a cause to remove, grant an end to attain,  
 Grant both to be just, and what mercy in pain!  
 Cease the sin with the sorrow! See morning begin!  
 Pain must burn itself out if not fuelled by sin.  
 There is hope in yon hill-tops, and love in yon light.  
 Let hate and despondency die with the night!"

He was moved by her words. As some poor wretch confined  
 In cells loud with meaningless laughter, whose mind  
 Wanders trackless amidst its own ruins, may hear  
 A voice heard long since, silenced many a year,  
 And now, 'mid mad ravings recaptured again,  
 Singing through the caged lattice a once well-known strain,  
 Which brings back his boyhood upon it, until  
 The mind's ruined crevices graciously fill  
 With music and memory, and, as it were  
 The long-troubled spirit grows slowly aware  
 Of the mockery round it, and shrinks from each thing

It once sought, — the poor idiot who passed for a king.  
 Hard by, with his squalid straw crown, now confessed  
 A madman more painfully mad than the rest, —  
 So the sound of her voice, as it there wandered o'er  
 His echoing heart, seemed in part to restore  
 The forces of thought: here captured the whole  
 Of his life by the light which, in passing, her soul  
 Reflected on his: he appeared to awake  
 From a dream, and perceived he had dreamed a mistake:  
 His spirit was softened, yet troubled in him:  
 He felt his lips falter, his eyesight grow dim,  
 But he murmured . . .  
 "Lucile, not for me that sun's light Which reveals — not restores — the wild havoc of night.  
 There are some creatures born for the night, not the day.  
 Broken-hearted the nightingale hides in the spray,  
 And the owl's moody mind in his own hollow tower  
 Dwells muffled. Be darkness henceforward my dower.  
 Light, be sure, in that darkness there dwells, by which eyes  
 Grown familiar with ruins may yet recognize  
 Enough desolation."

## IX.

"The pride that claims here  
 On earth to itself (howsoever severe  
 To itself it may be) God's dread office  
 and right  
 Of punishing sin, is a sin in heaven's sight,  
 And against heaven's service.  
 "Eugène de Luvois,  
 Leave the judgement to Him who  
 alone knows the law.

Surely no man can be his own judge,  
least of all  
His own doomsman."

Her words seemed to fall  
With the weight of tears in them.

He looked up, and saw  
That sad serene countenance, mourn-  
ful as law  
And tender as pity, bowed o'er him :  
and heard  
In some thicket the matinal chirp  
of a bird.

## X.

"Vulgar natures alone suffer vainly.  
"Eugène,"

She continued, "in life we have met  
once again,  
And once more life parts us. You  
day-spring for me  
Lifts the veil of a future in which  
it may be

We shall meet nevermore. Grant,  
O grant to me yet  
The belief that it is not in vain we  
have met! [scope

I plead for the future. A new horo-  
I would cast: will you read it? I  
plead for a hope:

I plead for a memory; yours, yours  
alone,

To restore or to spare. Let the hope  
be your own,  
Be the memory mine.

"Once of yore, when for man  
Faith yet lived, ere this age of the  
sluggard began.

Men, aroused to the knowledge of  
evil, fled far

From the fading rose-gardens of  
sense, to the war

With the Pagan, the cave in the  
desert, and sought

Not repose, but employment in ac-  
tion or thought,

Life's strong earnest, in all things!  
O think not of me,

But yourself! for I plead for your  
own destiny:

I plead for your life, with its duties  
undone,

With its claims unappeased, and its  
trophies unwon:

And in pleading for life's fair fui-  
lment, I plead

For all that you miss, and for all  
that you need."

## XI.

Through the calm crystal air, fain  
and far, as she spoke,

A clear, chilly chime from a church-  
turret broke;

And the sound of her voice, with the  
sound of the bell,

On his ear, where he kneeled, softly,  
soothingly fell.

All within him was wild and con-  
fused, as within

A chamber deserted in some road-  
side inn,

Where, passing, wild travellers  
paused, over-night,

To quaff and carouse; in each socket  
each light

Is extinct; crashed the glasses, and  
scrawled is the wall

With wild ribald ballads: serenely  
o'er all,

For the first time perceived, where  
the dawn-light creeps faint

Through the wrecks of that orgy,  
the face of a saint,

Seen through some broken frame,  
appears noting meanwhile

The ruin all round with a sorrowful  
smile.

And he gazed round. The curtains  
of Darkness half drawn

Oped behind her; and pure as the  
pure light of dawn,

She stood, bathed in morning, and  
seemed to his eyes

From their sight to be melting away  
in the skies

That expanded around her.

## XII.

There passed through his head  
A fancy, — a vision. That woman  
was dead

He had loved long ago, — loved and  
lost! dead to him,

Dead to all the life left him; but  
 there, in the dim  
 Dewy light of the dawn, stood a  
 spirit; 'twas hers;  
 And he said to the soul of Lucile de  
 Nevers: [away!  
 "O soul to its sources departing  
 Pray for mine, if one soul for another  
 may pray.  
 I to ask have no right, thou to give  
 hast no power,  
 One hope to my heart. But in this  
 parting hour  
 I name not my heart, and I speak  
 not to thine.  
 Answer, soul of Lucile, to this dark  
 soul of mine,  
 Does not soul owe to soul, what to  
 heart heart denies,  
 Hope, when hope is salvation? Be-  
 hold, in yon skies,  
 This wild night is passing away  
 while I speak:  
 Lo, above us, the day-spring begin-  
 ning to break!  
 Something wakens within me, and  
 warms to the beam.  
 Is it hope that awakens? or do I but  
 dream?  
 I know not. It may be, perchance,  
 the first spark  
 Of a new light within me to solace  
 the dark [it may be  
 Unto which I return; or perchance  
 The last spark of fires half extin-  
 guished in me.  
 I know not. Thou goest thy way: I  
 my own:  
 For good or for evil, I know not.  
 Alone  
 This I know; we are parting. I  
 wished to say more,  
 But no matter! 'twill pass. All be-  
 tween us is o'er.  
 Forget the wild words of to-night.  
 'Twas the pain  
 For long years hoarded up, that rush-  
 ed from me again.  
 I was unjust: forgive me. Spare  
 now to reprove

Other words, other deeds. It was  
 madness, not love,  
 That you thwarted this night. What  
 is done is now done.  
 Death remains to avenge it, or life to  
 atone.  
 I was maddened, delirious! I saw  
 you return  
 To him — not to me; and I felt my  
 heart burn  
 With a fierce thirst for vengeance —  
 and thus . . . let it pass!  
 Long thoughts these, and so brief  
 the moments, alas!  
 Thou goest thy way, and I mine. I  
 suppose  
 'Tis to meet nevermore. Is it not  
 so? Who knows,  
 Or who heeds, where the exile from  
 Paradise flies?  
 Or what altars of his in the desert  
 may rise?  
 Is it not so, Lucile? Well, well  
 Thus then we part  
 Once again, soul from soul, as befor  
 heart from heart!"

## XIII.

And again, clearer far than the chim  
 of the bell,  
 The voice on his sense softly, sooth-  
 ingly fell.  
 "Our two paths must part us, Eu-  
 gène; for my own  
 Seems no more through that world  
 in which henceforth alone  
 You must work out (as now I believe  
 that you will)  
 The hope which you speak of. That  
 work I shall still  
 (If I live) watch and welcome, and  
 bless far away.  
 Doubt not this. But mistake not the  
 thought, if I say,  
 That the great moral combat between  
 human life  
 And each human soul must be single.  
 The strife  
 None can share, though by all its  
 results may be known.

When the soul arms for battle, she  
goes forth alone.

I say not, indeed, we shall meet  
nevermore,

For I know not. But meet, as we  
have met of yore,

I know that we cannot. Perchance  
we may meet

By the death-bed, the tomb, in the  
crowd, in the street,

Or in solitude even, but never again  
Shall we meet from henceforth as  
we have met, Eugène.

For we know not the way we are  
going, nor yet

Where our two ways may meet, or  
may cross. Life hath set

No landmarks before us. But this,  
this alone,

I will promise : whatever your path,  
or my own,

If, for once in the conflict before  
you, it chance

That the Dragon prevail, and with  
cleft shield, and lance

Lost or shattered, borne down by  
the stress of the war,

You falter and hesitate, if from afar  
I, still watching (unknown to your-  
self, it may be)

O'er the conflict to which I conjure  
you, should see

That my presence could rescue, sup-  
port you, or guide,

In the hour of that need I shall be  
at your side,

To warn, if you will, or incite, or  
control;

And again, once again, we shall  
meet, soul to soul!"

XIV.

The voice ceased.

He uplifted his eyes.

All alone

He stood on the bare edge of dawn.  
She was gone,

Like a star, when up bay after bay  
of the night,

Ripples in, wave on wave, the broad  
ocean o' light.

And at once, in her place, was the  
Sunrise! It rose

In its sumptuous splendor and  
solemn repose,

The supreme revelation of light.  
Domes of gold,

Realms of rose, in the Orient! And  
breathless, and bold,

While the great gates of heaven  
rolled back one by one,

The bright herald angel stood stern  
in the sun!

Thrice holy Eospheros! Light's  
reign began

In the heaven, on the earth, in the  
heart of the man.

The dawn on the mountains! the  
dawn everywhere!

Light! silence! the fresh innova-  
tions of air!

O earth, and O ether! A butterfly  
breeze

Floated up, fluttered down, and  
poised blithe on the trees.

Through the revelling woods, o'er  
the sharp-rippled stream,

Up the vale slow uncoiling itself  
out of dream,

Around the brown meadows, adown  
the hill-slope,

The spirits of morning were whis-  
pering, " *Hope!* "

XV.

He uplifted his eyes. In the place  
where she stood

But a moment before, and where  
now rolled the flood

Of the sunrise all golden, he seemed  
to behold,

In the young light of sunrise, an  
image unfold

Of his own youth, — its ardors, —  
its promise of fame, —

Its ancestral ambition; and France  
by the name

Of his sires seemed to call him.  
There, hovered in light,

That image aloft, o'er the shapeless  
and bright

And Aurorean clouds, which themselves seemed to be  
Brilliant fragments of that golden world, wherein he  
Had once dwelt, a native!

There, rooted and bound  
To the earth, stood the man, gazing at it! Around  
The rims of the sunrise it hovered and shone  
Transcendent, that type of a youth that was gone;  
And he,—as the body may yearn for the soul,  
So he yearned to embody that image. His whole  
Heart arose to regain it.

“And is it too late?”

No! For time is a fiction, and limits not fate.

Thought alone is eternal. Time thralls it in vain.

For the thought that springs upward and yearns to regain

The pure source of spirit, there is NO TOO LATE.

As the stream to its first mountain levels, elate

In the fountain arises, the spirit in [him  
Arose to that image. The image waned dim

Into heaven; and heavenward with it, to melt

As it melted, in day's broad expansion, he felt

With a thrill, sweet and strange, and intense, — awed, amazed, —

Something soar and ascend in his soul, as he gazed.

◆  
CANTO VI.

I.

MAN is born on a battle field. Round him, to rend

Or resist, the dread Powers he displaces attend,

By the cradle which Nature, amidst the stern shocks

That have shattered creation, and shapen it, rocks.

He leaps with a wail into being; and lo!

His own mother, fierce Nature herself, is his foe.

Her whirlwinds are roused into wrath o'er his head:

'Neath his feet roll her earthquakes: her solitudes spread

To daunt him: her forces dispute his command:

Her snows fall to freeze him: her suns burn to brand:

Her seas yawn to engulf him: her rocks rise to crush:

And the lion and leopard, allied, lurk to rush

On their startled invader.

In lone Malabar,  
Where the infinite forest spreads breathless and far,

'Mid the cruel of eye and the stealthy of claw

(Striped and spotted destroyers!) he sees, pale with awe,

On the menacing edge of a fiery sky Grim Doorga, blue-limbed and red-

handed, go by, [Terror.  
And the first thing he worships is

Anon, [on,  
Still impelled by necessity hungrily

He conquers the realms of his own self-reliance,

And the last cry of fear wakes the first of defiance.

From the serpent he crushes its poisonous soul:

Smitten down in his path see the dead lion roll!

On toward Heaven the son of Alcmena strides high on

The heads of the Hydra, the spoils of the lion;

And man, conquering Terror, is worshipped by man.

A camp has this world been since first it began!

From his tents sweeps the roving Arabian; at peace,

A mere wandering shepherd that follows the fleece;  
 But, warring his way through a world's destinies,  
 Lo, from Delhi, from Bagdad, from Cordova, rise  
 Domes of empyr, dowered with science and art,  
 Schools, libraries, forums, the palace, the mart!

New realms to man's soul have been conquered. But those,  
 Forthwith they are peopled for man by new foes!

The stars keep their secrets, the earth hides her own,  
 And bold must the man be that braves the Unknown!

Not a truth has to art or to science been given,

But brows have ached for it, and souls toiled and striven;

And many have striven, and many have failed, [they assailed.

And many died, slain by the truth  
 But when Man hath tamed Nature, asserted his place

And dominion, behold! he is brought face to face

With a new foe, — himself!

Nor may man on his shield  
 Everrest, for his foe is forever afield,  
 Danger ever at hand, till the arméd Archangel

Sound o'er him the trump of earth's final evangel.

## II.

Silence straightway, stern Muse, the soft cymbals of pleasure,

Be all bronzen these numbers, and martial the measure!

Breathe, sonorously breathe, o'er the spirit in me

One strain, sad and stern, of that deep Epopée

Which thou, from the fashionless cloud of far time,

Chantest lonely, when Victory, pale, and sublime

In the light of the aureole over her head,

Hears, and heeds not the wound in her heart fresh and red.

Blown wide by the blare of the clarion, unfold

The shrill clanging curtains of war!  
 And behold

A vision!

The antique Heracleean seats;  
 And the long Black Sea billow that once bore those fleets,

Which said to the winds, "Be ye, too, Genoese!"

And the red angry sands of the chafed Chersonese;

And the two foes of man, War and Winter, allied

Round the Armies of England and France, side by side

Enduring and dying (Gaul and Britain abreast!)

Where the towers of the North fret the skies of the East.

## III.

Since that sunrise, which rose through the calm linden stems  
 O'er Lucile and Eugène, in the garden at Ems,

Through twenty-five seasons encircling the sun,

This planet of ours on its pathway bath gone,

And the fates that I sing of have flowed with the fates

Of a world, in the red wake of war, round the gates [which

Of that doomed and heroical city, in (Fire crowning the rampart, blood bathing the ditch!)

At bay, fights the Russian as some hunted bear,

Whom the huntsmen have hemmed round at last in his lair.

## IV.

A fanged, arid plain, sapped with underground fire,

Soaked with snow, torn with shot-mashed to one gory mire!

There Fate's iron scale hangs in horrid suspense,  
 While those two famished ogres, — the Siege, the Defence,  
 Face to face, through a vapor froze, dismal, and dun,  
 Glare, scenting the breath of each other.

The one  
 Double-bodied, two-headed, — by separate ways  
 Winding, serpent-wise, nearer; the other, each day's  
 Sullen toil adding size to, — concentrated, solid,  
 Indefatigable, — the brass-fronted, embodied,  
 And audible *avros* gone sombrely forth  
 To the world from that Autocrat  
 Will of the north!

## V.

In the dawn of a moody October, a pale  
 Ghostly motionless vapor began to  
 Over city and camp; like the garment of death  
 Which (is formed by) the face it conceals.

'Twas the breath  
 War, yet drowsily yawning, began to suspire;  
 Where through, here and there, flashed an eye of red fire,  
 And closed, from some rampart beginning to bellow  
 Hoarse challenge; replied to anon, through the yellow  
 And sulphurous twilight: till day reeled and rocked,  
 And roared into dark. Then the midnight was mocked  
 With fierce apparitions. Ringed round by a rain  
 Of red fire, and of iron, the murderous plain  
 Flared with fitful combustion; where fitfully fell  
 Afar off the fatal, disgorged *scharpenelle*,

And fired the horizon, and singed the coiled gloom  
 With wings of swift flameround that City of Doom.

## VI.

So the day — so the night! So by night, so by day,  
 With stern patient pathos, while time wears away,  
 In the trench flooded through, in the wind where it wails,  
 In the snow where it falls, in the fire where it hails  
 Shot and shell — link by link, out of hardship and pain,  
 Toil, sickness, endurance, is forged the bronze chain  
 Of those terrible siege-lines!

No change to that toil  
 Save the mine's sudden leap from the treacherous soil.  
 Save the midnight attack, save the groans of the maimed,  
 And Death's daily obolus due, whether claimed  
 By man or by nature.

## VII.

Time passes. The dumb, Bitter, snow-bound, and sullen November is come.  
 And its snows have been bathed in the blood of the brave:  
 And many a young heart has glutted the grave:  
 And on Inkerman yet the wild bramble is gory,  
 And those bleak heights henceforth shall be famous in story.

## VIII.

The moon, swathed in storm, has long set: through the camp  
 No sound save the sentinel's slow sullen tramp,  
 The distant explosion, the wild sleety wind,  
 That seems searching for something it never can find.  
 The midnight is turning: the lamp is nigh spent:

And, wounded and lone, in a desolate tent  
Lies a young British soldier whose sword . . .

In this place,

However, my Muse is compelled to retrace

Her precipitous steps and revert to the past.

The shock which had suddenly shattered at last

Alfred Vargrave's fantastical holiday nature,

Had sharply drawn forth to his full size and stature

The real man, concealed till that moment beneath

All he yet had appeared. From the gay brodered sheath

Which a man in his wrath flings aside, even so

Leaps the keen trenchant steel summoned forth by a blow.

And thus loss of fortune gave value to life. [a wife,

The wife gained a husband, the husband in that home which, though humbled

and narrowed by fate, was enlarged and ennobled by love.

Low their state, But large their possessions.

Sir Ridley, forgiven

By those he unwittingly brought nearer heaven

By one fraudulent act, than through all his sleek speech

The hypocrite brought his own soul, safe from reach

Of the law, died abroad. Cousin John, heart and hand,

Purse and person, henceforth (honest man!) took his stand

By Matilda and Alfred; guest, guardian, and friend

Of the home he both shared and assured, to the end,

With his large lively love. Alfred Vargrave meanwhile

Faced the world's frown, consoled by his wife's faithful smile.

Late in life he began life in earnest: and still, [lute will,

With the tranquil exertion of resolute—

Through long, and laborious, and difficult days,

Out of manifold failure, by wearisome ways,

Worked his way through the world till at last he began

(Reconciled to the work which mankind claims from man),

After years of unwitnessed, unwearyed endeavor,

Years impassioned yet patient, to realize ever

More clear on the broad stream of current opinion

The reflex of powers in himself,—that dominion

Which the life of one man, if his life be a truth,

May assert o'er the life of mankind. Thus, his youth

In his manhood renewed, fame and fortune he won

Working only for home, love, and duty.

One son

Matilda had borne him; but scarce had the boy,

With all Eton yet fresh in his full heart's frank joy,

The darling of young soldier comrades, just glanced

Down the glad dawn of manhood at life, when it chanced

That a blight sharp and sudden was breathed o'er the bloom

Of his joyous and generous years, and the gloom

Of a grief premature on their fair promise fell:

No light cloud like those which, for June to dispel,

Captious April engenders; but deep as his own

Deep nature. Meanwhile, ere I fully make known

The cause of this sorrow, I track the event.



When first a wild war-note through  
 England was sent,  
 He, transferring without either to-  
 ken or word,  
 To friend, parent, or comrade, a yet  
 virgin sword,  
 From a holiday troop, to one bound  
 for the war,  
 Had marched forth, with eyes that  
 saw death in the star  
 Wheuce others sought glory. Thus,  
 fighting, he fell  
 On the red field of Inkerman; found,  
 who can tell  
 By what miracle, breathing, though  
 shattered, and borne  
 To the rear by his comrades, pierced,  
 bleeding, and torn.  
 Where for long days and nights,  
 with the wound in his side,  
 He lay, dark.

## IX.

But a wound deeper far, unde-  
 scribed,  
 In the young heart was rankling;  
 for there, of a truth,  
 In the first earnest faith of a pure  
 pensive youth,  
 A love large as life, deep and  
 changeless as death,  
 Lay ensheathed: and that love, ever  
 fretting its sheath,  
 The frail scabbard of life pierced and  
 wore through and through.  
 There are loves in man's life for  
 which time can renew  
 All that time may destroy. Lives  
 there are, though, in love,  
 Which cling to one faith, and die  
 with it; nor move,  
 Though earthquakes may shatter  
 the shrine.

Whence or how  
 Love laid claim to this young life,  
 it matters not now.

## X.

O, is it a phantom? a dream of the  
 night?  
 A vision which fever hath fashioned  
 to sight?

The wind wailing ever, with motion  
 uncertain,  
 Sways sighingly there the drenched  
 tent's tattered curtain,  
 To and-fro, up and down.

But it is not the wind  
 That is lifting it now: and it is not  
 the mind

That hath moulded that vision.

A pale woman enters,  
 As wan as the lamp's waning light,  
 which concentrates

Its dull glare upon her. With eyes  
 dim and dimmer

There, all in a slumberous and shad-  
 ovy glimmer,

The sufferer sees that still form  
 floating on,

And feels faintly aware that he is  
 not alone.

She is sitting before him. She  
 pauses. She stands

By his bedside, all silent. She lays  
 her white hands

On the brow of the boy. A light  
 finger is pressing

Softly, softly the sore wounds: the  
 hot blood-stained dressing

Slips from them. A comforting  
 quietude steals

Through the racked weary frame:  
 and, throughout it, he feels

The slow sense of a merciful, mild  
 neighborhood.

Something smooths the tossed pil-  
 low. Beneath a gray hood

Of rough serge, two intense tender  
 eyes are bent o'er him,

And thrill through and through him.  
 The sweet form before him.

It is surely Death's angel Life's last  
 vigil keeping!

A soft voice says . . . "Sleep!"  
 And he sleeps: he is sleeping.

## XI.

He waked before dawn. Still the  
 vision is there:

Still that pale woman moves not.  
 A ministering care

Meanwhile has been silently chang-  
ing and cheering  
The aspect of all things around him.  
Revering  
Some power unknown and benign-  
nant, he blessed  
In silence the sense of salvation.  
And rest

Having loosened the mind's tangled  
meshes, he faintly  
Sighed . . . "Say what thou art,  
blessèd dream of a saintly  
And ministering spirit!"

A whisper serene  
Slid, softer than silence . . . "The  
Sœur Seraphine,  
A poor Sister of Charity. Shun to  
inquire  
Aught further, young soldier. The  
son of thy sire,  
For the sake of that sire, I reclaim  
from the grave.

Thou didst not shun death: shun  
not life. 'Tis more brave  
To live, than to die. Sleep!"

He sleeps: he is sleeping.

XII.

He wakened again, when the dawn  
was just steeping  
The skies with chill splendor. And  
there, never flitting,  
Never flitting, that vision of mercy  
was sitting.

As the dawn to the darkness, so  
life seemed returning  
Slowly, feebly within him. The  
night-lamp, yet burning,  
Made ghastly the glimmering day-  
break.

He said,

"If thou be of the living, and not  
of the dead,  
Sweet minister, pour out yet further  
the healing [revealing  
Of that balmy voice; if it may be,  
Thy mission of mercy! whence art  
thou?"

"O son

Of Matilda and Alfred, it matters  
not! One

Who is not of the living nor yet of  
the dead:

To thee, and to others, alive yet,"  
. . . she said . . .

"So long as there liveth the poor  
gift in me [to thee,  
Of this ministration; to them, and  
Dead in all things beside. A French  
Nun, whose vocation

Is now by this bedside. A nun hath  
no nation. [may soothe,  
Whatever man suffers or woman  
There her land! there her kindred!"

She bent down to smooth  
The hot pillow: and added . . .

"Yet more than another  
Is thy life dear to me. For thy  
father, thy mother,  
I knew them,—I know them."

"O can it be? you!  
My dearest dear father! my mother!  
you knew,  
You know them?"

She bowed, halfaverting, her head  
In silence.

He brokenly, timidly said,  
"Do they know I am thus?"

"Hush!" . . . she smiled, as she  
drew

From her bosom two letters; and  
—can it be true?

That beloved and familiar writing!  
He burst

Into tears . . . "My poor mother  
—my father! the worst  
Will have reached them!"

"No, no!" she exclaimed with a  
smile,

"They know you are living; they  
know that meanwhile

I am watching beside you. Young  
soldier, weep not!"

But still on the nun's nursing bosom,  
the hot

Fevered brow of the boy weeping  
wildly is pressed.

There, at last, the young heart sobs  
itself into rest:

And he hears, as it were between  
smiling and weeping,

The calm voice say . . . "Sleep!"  
And he sleeps, he is sleeping.

## XIII.

And day followed day. And, as  
wave follows wave,  
With the tide, day by day, life, re-  
issuing, drave  
Through that young hardy frame  
novel currents of health.  
Yet some strange obstruction,  
which life's self by stealth  
Seemed to cherish, impeded life's  
progress. And still  
A feebleness, less of the frame than  
the will,  
Clung about the sick man: hid and  
harbored within  
The sad hollow eyes: pinched the  
cheek pale and thin:  
And clothed the wan fingers with  
languor.

## And there,

Day by day, night by night, unre-  
mitting in care,  
Unwearied in watching, so cheerful  
of mien,  
And so gentle of hand, sat the  
Sœur Seraphine!

## XIV.

A strange woman truly! not young;  
yet her face,  
Wan and worn, as it was, bore  
about it the trace  
Of a beauty which time could not  
ruin. For the whole  
Quiet cheek, youth's lost bloom left  
transparent, the soul  
Seemed to fill with its own light,  
like some sunny fountain  
Everlastingly fed from far off in  
the mountain  
That pours, in a garden deserted,  
its streams,  
And all the more lovely for loneli-  
ness seems.  
So that, watching that face, you  
would scarce pause to guess  
The years which its calm careworn  
lines might express,

Feeling only what suffering with  
these must have passed  
To have perfected there so much  
sweetness at last.

## XV.

Thus, one bronzen evening, when  
day had put out  
His brief thrifty fires, and the wind  
was about,  
The nun, watchful still by the boy,  
on his own  
Laid a firm quiet hand, and the  
deep tender tone  
Of her voice moved the silence.  
She said . . . "I have healed  
These wounds of the body. Why  
hast thou concealed,  
Young soldier, that yet open wound  
in the heart?

Wilt thou trust *no* hand near it?"

He winced, with a start,  
As of one that is suddenly touched  
on the spot  
From which every nerve derives  
suffering.

## "What?

Lies my heart, then, so bare?" he  
moaned bitterly.

## "Nay,"

With compassionate accents she  
hastened to say,  
"Do you think that these eyes are  
with sorrow, young man,  
So all unfamiliar, indeed, as to scan  
Her features, yet know them not?

"O, was it spoken,  
'Go ye forth, heal the sick, lift the  
low, bind the broken!'

Of the body alone? Is our mission,  
then, done,

When we leave the bruised hearts,  
if we bind the bruised bone!

Nay, is not the mission of mercy  
twofold?

Whence twofold, perchance, are the  
powers, that we hold

To fulfil it, of Heaven! For Heaven  
doth still

To us, Sisters, it may be, who seek  
it, send skill

Won from long intercourse with  
 affliction, and art  
 Helped of Heaven, to bind up the  
 broken of heart.  
 Trust to me!" (His two feeble  
 hands in her own  
 She drew gently.) "Trust to me!"  
 (she said, with soft tone):  
 "I am not so dead in remembrance  
 to all  
 I have died to in this world, but  
 what I recall [trial,  
 Enough of its sorrow, enough of its  
 To grieve for both, — save from  
 both haply! The dial  
 Receives many shades, and each  
 points to the sun.  
 The shadows are many, the sunlight  
 is one.  
 Life's sorrows still fluctuate: God's  
 love does not.  
 And His love is unchanged, when it  
 changes our lot.  
 Looking up to this light, which is  
 common to all,  
 And down to these shadows, on  
 each side, that fall  
 In time's silent circle, so various  
 for each,  
 Is it nothing to know that they  
 never can reach  
 So far, but what light lies beyond  
 them forever? [endeavor  
 Trust to me! O, if in this hour I  
 To trace the shade creeping across  
 the young life  
 Which, in prayer till this hour, I  
 have watched through its strife  
 With the shadow of death, 'tis with  
 this faith alone,  
 That, in tracing the shade, I shall  
 find out the sun.  
 Trust to me!"  
 She paused: he was weeping.  
 Small need  
 Of added appeal, or entreaty, indeed,  
 Had those gentle accents to win  
 from his pale  
 And parched, trembling lips, as it  
 rose, the brief tale

Of a life's early sorrow. The story  
 is old,  
 And in words few as may be shall  
 straightway be told.

## XVI.

A few years ago, ere the fair form  
 of Peace  
 Was driven from Europe, a young  
 girl — the niece  
 Of a French noble, leaving an old  
 Norman pile  
 By the wild northern seas, came to  
 dwell for a while  
 With a lady allied to her race, — an  
 old dame  
 Of a threefold legitimate virtue,  
 and name,  
 In the Faubourg Saint Germain.  
 Upon that fair child,  
 From childhood, nor father nor  
 mother had smiled.  
 One uncle their place in her life  
 had supplied,  
 And their place in her heart: she  
 had grown at his side,  
 And under his roof-tree, and in his  
 regard,  
 From childhood to girlhood.  
 This fair orphan ward  
 Seemed the sole human creature  
 that lived in the heart  
 Of that stern rigid man, or whose  
 smile could impart  
 One ray of response to the eyes  
 which, above  
 Her fair infant forehead, looked  
 down with a love  
 That seemed almost stern, so in-  
 tense was its chill  
 Lofty stillness, like sunlight on  
 some lonely hill,  
 Which is colder and stiller than  
 sunlight elsewhere.  
 Grass grew in the courtyard; the  
 chambers were bare  
 In that ancient mansion; when first  
 the stern tread  
 Of its owner awakened their echoes  
 long dead:

Bringing with him this infant (the  
 child of a brother),  
 Whom, dying, the hands of a deso-  
 late mother  
 Had placed on his bosom. 'Twas  
 said—right or wrong—  
 That, in the lone mansion, left ten-  
 antless long,  
 To which, as a stranger, its lord  
 now returned,  
 In years yet recalled, through loud  
 midnights had burned  
 The light of wild orgies. Be that  
 false or true,  
 Slow and sad was the footstep which  
 now wandered through  
 Those desolate chambers; and calm  
 and severe  
 Was the life of their inmate.

Men now saw appear

Every morn at the mass that firm  
 sorrowful face,  
 Which seemed to lock up in a cold  
 iron case  
 Tears hardened to crystal. Yet  
 harsh if he were,  
 His severity seemed to be trebly  
 severe  
 In the rule of his own rigid life,  
 which, at least,  
 Was benignant to others. The  
 poor parish priest,  
 Who lived on his largess, his piety  
 praised. [was raised.  
 The peasant was fed, and the chapel  
 And the cottage was built, by his  
 liberal hand.

Yet he seemed in the midst of his  
 good deeds to stand  
 A lone, and unloved, and unlovable  
 man.

There appeared some inscrutable  
 flaw in the plan  
 Of his life, that love failed to pass  
 over.

That child

Alone did not fear him, nor shrink  
 from him; smiled  
 To his frown, and dispelled it.  
 The sweet sportive elf

Seemed the type of some joy lost,  
 and missed in himself.  
 Ever welcome he suffered her glad  
 face to glide  
 In on hours when to others his  
 door was denied:  
 And many a time with a mute  
 moody look  
 He would watch her at prattle and  
 play, like a brook  
 Whose babble disturbs not the  
 quietest spot,  
 But soothes us because we need  
 answer it not.  
 But few years had passed o'er that  
 childhood before  
 A change came among them. A  
 letter, which bore  
 Sudden consequence with it, one  
 morning was placed  
 In the hands of the lord of the châ-  
 teau. He paced  
 To and fro in his chamber a whole  
 night alone  
 After reading that letter. At dawn  
 he was gone.  
 Weeks passed. When he came back  
 again he returned  
 With a tall ancient dame, from  
 whose lips the child learned  
 That they were of the same race  
 and name. With a face  
 Sad and anxious, to this withered  
 stock of the race  
 He confided the orphan and left  
 them alone  
 In the lonely old house.  
 In a few days 'twas known,  
 To the angry surprise of half Paris,  
 that one  
 Of the chiefs of that party which,  
 still clinging on  
 To the banner that bears the white  
 lilies of France,  
 Will fight 'neath no other, nor yet  
 for the chance  
 Of restoring their own, had re-  
 nounced the watchword  
 And the creed of his youth in un-  
 sheathing his sword

For a Fatherland fathered no more  
 (such is fate!)  
 By legitimate parents.

And meanwhile, elate  
 And in no wise disturbed by what  
 Paris might say,  
 The new soldier thus wrote to a  
 friend far away:—

“To the life of inaction farewell!  
 After all,

Creeds the oldest may crumble, and  
 dynasties fall,

But the sole grand Legitimacy will  
 endure,

In whatever makes death noble, life  
 strong and pure.

Freedom! action! . . . the desert to  
 breathe in,—the lance

Of the Arab to follow! I go! *Vive  
 ia France!*”

Few and rare were the meetings  
 henceforth, as years fled,

’Twixt the child and the soldier.  
 The two women led

Lone lives in the lone house.  
 Meanwhile the child grew

Into girlhood; and, like a sunbeam,  
 sliding through

Her green quiet years, changed by  
 gentle degrees

To the loveliest vision of youth a  
 youth sees

In his loveliest fancies: as pure as  
 a pearl,

And as perfect: a noble and inno-  
 cent girl,

With eighteen sweet summers dis-  
 solved in the light

Of her lovely and lovable eyes,  
 soft and bright!

Then her guardian wrote to the  
 dame, . . . “Let Constance

Go with you to Paris. I trust that  
 in France

I may be ere the close of the year.  
 I confide

My life’s treasure to you. Let her  
 see, at your side,

The world which we live in.”  
 To Paris then came

Constance to abide with that old  
 stately dame

In that old stately Faubourg.

The young Englishman  
 Thus met her. ’Twas there their  
 acquaintance began,

There it closed. That old miracle  
 — Love-at-first-sight—

Needs no explanations. The heart  
 reads aright

Its destiny sometimes. His love  
 neither chidden

Nor checked, the young soldier was  
 graciously bidden

An habitual guest to that house by  
 the dame.

His own candid graces, the world-  
 honored name

Of his father (in him not dishonored)  
 were both [ing loath,

Fair titles to favor. His love, noth-  
 The old lady observed, was returned

by Constance.  
 And as the child’s uncle his absence  
 from France

Yet prolonged, she (thus easing  
 long self-gratulation)

Wrote to him a lengthened and  
 moving narration

Of the graces and gifts of the  
 young English wooer:

His father’s fair fame; the boy’s  
 deference to her;

His love for Constance,—unaf-  
 fected, sincere;

And the girl’s love for him, read by  
 her in those clear

Limpid eyes; then the pleasure with  
 which she awaited

Her cousin’s approval of all she had  
 stated.

At length from that cousin an an-  
 swer there came,

Brief, stern; such as stumped and  
 astonished the dame.

“Let Constance leave Paris with  
 you on the day

You receive this. Until my return  
 she may stay

At her convent awhile. If my niece  
wishes ever  
To behold me again, understand,  
she will never  
Wed that man.

“You have broken faith with me.  
Farewell!”

No appeal from that sentence.

It needs not to tell  
The tears of *Constànce*, nor the  
grief of her lover:

The dream they had laid out their  
lives in was over.

Bravely strove the young soldier to  
look in the face

Of a life, where invisible hands  
seemed to trace

O'er the threshold, these words . . .  
“Hope no more!”

Unreturned  
Had his love been, the strong man-  
ful heart would have spurned  
That weakness which suffers a wo-  
man to lie

At the roots of man's life, like a  
canker, and dry

And wither the sap of life's pur-  
pose. But there

Lay the bitterer part of the pain!  
Could he dare

To forget he was loved? that he  
grieved not alone?

Recording a love that drew sorrow  
upon

The woman he loved, for himself  
dare he seek

Surcease to that sorrow, which  
thus held him weak,

Beat him down, and destroyed him?  
News reached him indeed,

Through a comrade, who brought  
him a letter to read

From the dame who had care of  
*Constànce* (it was one

To whom, when at Paris, the boy  
had been known,

A Frenchman, and friend of the  
Faubourg), which said

That *Constànce*, although never a  
murmur betrayed

What she suffered, in silence grew  
paler each day,  
And seemed visibly drooping and  
dying away.

It was then he sought death.

## XVII.

Thus the tale ends. 'Twas told  
With such broken, passionate words,  
as unfold

In glimpses alone, a coiled grief.  
Through each pause

Of its fitful recital, in raw gusty  
flaws,

The rain shook the canvas, unheed-  
ed; aloof,

And unheeded, the night-wind  
around the tent-roof

At intervals wirbled. And when  
all was said,

The sick man, exhausted, drooped  
backward his head,

And fell into a feverish slumber.

Long while  
Sat the *Sœur Seraphine*, in deep  
thought. The still smile

That was wont, angel-wise, to in-  
habit her face

And make it like heaven, was fled  
from its place

In her eyes, on her lips; and a deep  
sadness there

Seemed to darken the lines of long  
sorrow and care,

As low to herself she sighed . . .

“Hath it, *Eugène*,  
Been so long, then, the struggle? . . .  
and yet, all in vain!

Nay, not all in vain! Shall the  
world gain a man,

And yet Heaven lose a soul? Have  
I done all I can?

Soul to soul, did he say? Soul to  
soul, be it so!

And then, — soul of mine, whither?  
whither?”

## XVIII.

Large, slow,  
Silent tears in those deep eyes as  
cended, and fell.

"Here, at least, I have failed not"  
 . . . she mused . . . "this is  
 well!"

She drew from her bosom two letters.  
 In one,

A mother's heart, wild with alarm  
 for her son,

Breathed bitterly forth its despairing  
 appeal.

"The pledge of a love owed to  
 thee, O Lucile!

The hope of a home saved by thee,  
 — of a heart

Which hath never since then (thrice  
 endeared as thou art!)

Ceased to bless thee, to pray for  
 thee, save! . . . save my son!

And if not" . . . the letter went  
 brokenly on,

"Heaven help us!"

Then followed, from Alfred, a few  
 Blotted heart-broken pages. He  
 mournfully drew,

With pathos, the picture of that  
 earnest youth, [and truth

So unlike his own: how in beauty  
 He had nurtured that nature, so  
 simple and brave!

And how he had striven his son's  
 youth to save

From the errors so sadly redeemed  
 in his own,

And so deeply repented: how thus,  
 in that son,

In whose youth he had garnered  
 his age, he had seemed

To be blessed by a pledge that the  
 past was redeemed,

And forgiven. He bitterly went on  
 to speak

Of the boy's baffled love; in which  
 fate seemed to break

Unawares on his dreams with re-  
 tributive pain,

And the ghosts of the past rose to  
 scourge back again

The hopes of the future. To sue  
 for consent

Pride forbade: and the hope his  
 old foe might relent

Experience rejected . . . "My life  
 for the boy's!"

(He exclaimed); "for I die with  
 my son, if he dies!

Lucile! Heaven bless you for all  
 you have done!

Save him, save him, Lucile! save  
 my son! save my son!"

## XIX.

"Ay!" murmured the Sœur Sera-  
 phine . . . "heart to heart!

There, at least, I have failed not.  
 Fulfilled is my part?

Accomplished my mission? One  
 act crowns the whole.

Do I linger? Nay, be it so, then!  
 . . . Soul to soul!"

She knelt down, and prayed. Still  
 the boy slumbered on.

Dawn broke. The pale nun from  
 the bedside was gone.

## XX.

Meanwhile, 'mid his aides-de-camp,  
 busily bent

O'er the daily reports, in his well-  
 ordered tent

There sits a French General, —  
 bronzed by the sun

And seared by the sands of Algeria.  
 One

Who forth from the wars of the  
 wild Kabylee [be

Had strangely and rapidly risen to  
 The idol, the darling, the dream,  
 and the star

Of the younger French chivalry:  
 daring in war,

And wary in council. He entered,  
 indeed,

Late in life (and discarding his  
 Bourbonite creed)

The Army of France: and had  
 risen, in part,

From a singular aptitude proved for  
 the art

Of that wild desert warfare of am-  
 bush, surprise,

And stratagem, which to the French  
 camp supplies



Its subtlest intelligence ; partly from  
 chance ;  
 Partly, too, from a name and position  
 which France  
 Was proud to put forward ; but  
 mainly, in fact,  
 From the prudence to plan, and the  
 daring to act,  
 In frequent emergencies startlingly  
 shown,  
 To the rank which he now held, —  
 intrepidly won  
 With many a wound, trenched in  
 many a scar,  
 From fierce Milianah and Sidi-Sakhar.

## XXI.

All within, and without, that warm  
 tent seems to bear  
 Smiling token of provident order  
 and care.  
 All about, a well-fed, well-clad soldierly  
 stands  
 In groups round the music of mirth-  
 breathing bands.  
 In and out of the tent, all day long,  
 to and fro,  
 The messengers come, and the mes-  
 sengers go,  
 Upon missions of mercy, or errands  
 of toil :  
 To report how the sapper contends  
 with the soil  
 In the terrible trench, how the sick  
 man is faring  
 In the hospital tent : and, combin-  
 ing, comparing,  
 Constructing, within moves the  
 brain of one man,  
 Moving all.  
 He is bending his brow o'er some  
 plan  
 For the hospital service, wise, skil-  
 ful, humane.  
 The officer standing beside him is  
 fain  
 To refer to the angel solicitous  
 cares  
 Of the Sisters of Charity : one he  
 declares

To be known through the camp as  
 a seraph of grace :  
 He has seen, all have seen her in-  
 deed, in each place  
 Where suffering is seen, silent, ac-  
 tive, — the Sœur . . .  
 Sœur . . . how do they call her ?  
 “ Ay, truly, of her  
 I have heard much,” the General,  
 musing, replies ;  
 “ And we owe her already (unless  
 rumor lies)  
 The lives of not few of our bravest.  
 You mean . . .  
 Ay, how do they call her ? . . . the  
 Sœur — Seraphine,  
 (Is it not so ?) I rarely forget names  
 once heard.”  
 “ Yes ; the Sœur Seraphine. Her I  
 meant.”  
 “ On my word,  
 I have much wished to see her. I  
 fancy I trace,  
 In some facts traced to her, some-  
 thing more than the grace  
 Of an angel : I mean an acute hu-  
 man mind,  
 Ingenious, constructive, intelligent.  
 Find  
 And, if possible, let her come to me.  
 We shall,  
 I think, aid each other.  
 “ *Oui, mon Général :*  
 I believe she has lately obtained the  
 permission  
 To tend some sick man in the Sec-  
 ond Division  
 Of our Ally : they say a relation.  
 “ Ay, so ?  
 A relation ? ”  
 “ ’Tis said so.”  
 “ The name do you know ? ”  
 “ *Non, mon Général.* ”  
 While they spoke yet, there went  
 A murmur and stir round the door  
 of the tent.  
 “ A Sister of Charity craves, in a  
 case  
 Of urgent and serious importance,  
 the grace

Of brief private speech with the  
General there.  
Will the General speak with her?"  
Her mission."  
"She will not. She craves to be  
seen  
And be heard."  
"Well, her name then?"  
"The Sœur Seraphine."  
"Clear the tent. She may enter."

XXII.

The tent has been cleared.  
The chieftain stroked moodily  
somewhat his beard,  
A sable long silvered: and pressed  
down his brow  
On his hand, heavy veined. All his  
countenance, now  
Unwitnessed, at once fell dejected,  
and dreary,  
As a curtain let fall by a hand that's  
grown weary,  
Into puckers and folds. From his  
lips, unrepressed,  
Steals th' impatient quick sigh,  
which reveals in man's breast  
A conflict concealed, an experience  
at strife  
With itself, — the vexed heart's  
passing protest on life.  
He turned to his papers. He heard  
the light tread  
Of a faint foot behind him: and,  
lifting his head,  
Said, "Sit, Holy Sister! your worth  
is well known  
To the hearts of our soldiers; nor  
less to my own.  
I have much wished to see you. I  
owe you some thanks:  
In the name of all those you have  
saved to our ranks  
I record them. Sit! Now then,  
your mission?"

The nun

Paused silent. The General eyed  
her anon  
More keenly. His aspect grew  
troubled. A change

Darkened over his features. He  
\* muttered . . . "Strange!  
strange!  
Any face should so strongly remind  
me of her!  
Fool! again the delirium, the dream!  
does it stir?  
Does it move as of old? Psha!  
"Sit, Sister! I wait  
Your answer, my time halts but  
hurriedly. State  
The cause why you seek me?"  
"The cause? ay, the cause!"  
She vaguely repeated. Then, after  
a pause, —  
As one who, awaked unawares,  
would put back [the track  
The sleep that forever returns in  
Of dreams which, though scared  
and dispersed, not the less  
Settle back to faint eyelids that  
yield 'neath their stress,  
Like doves to a penthouse, — a  
movement she made,  
Less toward him than away from  
herself; drooped her head  
And folded her hands on her bosom:  
long, spare,  
Fatigued, mournful hands! Not a  
stream of stray hair  
Escaped the pale bands; scarce  
more pale than the face  
Which they bound and locked up  
in a rigid white case.  
She fixed her eyes on him. There  
crept a vague awe  
O'er his sense, such as ghosts cast.  
"Eugène de Luvois,  
The cause which recalls me again  
to your side  
Is a promise that rests unfulfilled,"  
she replied.  
"I come to fulfil it."  
He sprang from the place  
Where he sat, pressed his hand, as  
in doubt, o'er his face;  
And, cautiously feeling each step  
o'er the ground  
That he trod on (as one who walks  
fearing the sound

Of his footstep may startle and  
scare out of sight  
Some strange sleeping creature on  
which he would light  
Unawares), crept towards her; one  
heavy hand laid  
On her shoulder in silence; bent  
o'er her his head,  
Searched her face with a long look  
of troubled appeal  
Against doubt; staggered backward,  
and murmured . . . "Lucile!  
Thus we meet then? . . . here! . . .  
thus?"

"Soul to soul, ay, Eugène,  
As I pledged you my word that we  
should meet again.  
Dead, . . ." she murmured, "long  
dead! all that lived in our  
lives, —  
Thine and mine, — saving that which  
ev'n life's self survives,  
The soul! 'Tis my soul seeks thine  
own. What may reach  
From my life to thy life (so wide  
each from each!)  
Save the soul to the soul? To the  
soul I would speak.  
May I do so?"

He said (worked and white was  
his cheek  
As he raised it), "Speak to me!"  
Deep, tender, serene,  
And sad was the gaze which the  
Sœur Seraphine  
Held on him. She spoke.

XXIII.

As some minstrel may fling,  
Preluding the music yet mute in  
each string,  
A swift hand athwart the hushed  
heart of the whole,  
Seeking which note most fitly may  
first move the soul;  
And, leaving untroubled the deep  
chords below,  
Move pathetic in numbers remote;  
— even so  
The voice which was moving the  
heart of that man

Far away from its yet voiceless  
purpose began,  
Far away in the pathos remote of  
the past;  
Until, through her words, rose be-  
fore him, at last,  
Bright and dark in their beauty, the  
hopes that were gone  
Unaccomplished from life.

He was mute.

XXIV.

She went on.  
And still further down the dim past  
did she lead  
Each yielding remembrance, far, far  
off, to feed  
'Mid the pastures of youth, in the  
twilight of hope,  
And the valleys of boyhood, the  
fresh-flowered slope  
Of life's dawning land!

'Tis the heart of a boy,  
With its indistinct, passionate pre-  
science of joy!  
The unproved desire, — the unaimed  
aspiration, —  
The deep conscious life that fore-  
stalls consummation;  
With ever a fitting delight, — one  
arm's length  
In advance of the august inward  
impulse.

The strength  
Of the spirit which troubles the seed  
in the sand  
With the birth of the palm-tree!  
Let ages expand [lie shut  
The glorious creature! The ages  
(Safe, see!) in the seed, at time's  
signal to put  
Forth their beauty and power, leaf  
by leaf, layer on layer,  
Till the palm strikes the sun, and  
stands broad in blue air.  
So the palm in the palm-seed! so,  
slowly — so, wrought  
Year by year unperceived, hope on  
hope, thought by thought.  
Trace the growth of the man from  
its germ in the boy.

Ah, but Nature, that nurtures, may  
also destroy!

Charm the wind and the sun, lest  
some chance intervene!

While the leaf's in the bud, while  
the stem's in the green,

A light bird bends the branch, a  
light breeze breaks the bough,

Which, if spared by the light breeze,  
the light bird, may grow

To baffle the tempest, and rock the  
high nest,

And take both the bird and the  
breeze to its breast.

Shall we save a whole forest in  
sparing one seed?

Save the man in the boy? in the  
thought save the deed?

Let the whirlwind uproot the grown  
tree, if it can!

Save the seed from the north-wind.  
So let the grown man

Face out fate. Spare the man-seed  
in youth.

He was dumb.

She went one step further.

XXV.

Lo! manhood is come.

And love, the wild song-bird, hath  
flown to the tree,

And the whirlwind comes after.  
Now prove we, and see:

What shade from the leaf? what  
support from the branch?

Spreads the leaf broad and fair?  
holds the bough strong and  
staunch?

There, he saw himself, — dark, as  
he stood on that night,

The last when they met and they  
parted: a sight

For heaven to mourn o'er, for hell  
to rejoice!

An ineffable tenderness troubled her  
voice;

It grew weak, and a sigh broke it  
through.

Then he said

(Never looking at her, never lifting  
his head,

As though, at his feet, there lay  
visibly hurled

Those fragments), "It was not a  
love, 'twas a world,

'Twas a life that lay ruined, Lucile!"

XXVI.

She went on.

"So be it! Perish Babel, arise  
Babylon!

From ruins like these rise the fanes  
that shall last,

And to build up the future heaven  
shatters the past."

"Ay," he moodily murmured, "and  
who cares to scan

The heart's perished world, if the  
world gains a man?

From the past to the present, though  
late, I appeal;

To the nun Seraphine, from the  
woman Lucile!"

XXVII.

Lucile! . . . the old name, — the  
old self! silenced long:

Heard once more! felt once more!  
As some soul to the throng

Of invisible spirits admitted, bap-  
tized [—surprised

By death to a new name and nature,  
'Mid the songs of the seraphs, hears

faintly, and far,  
Some voice from the earth, left be-  
low a dim star,

Calling to her forlornly; and (sad-  
dening the psalms

Of the angels, and piercing the  
Paradise palms!)

The name borne 'mid earthly be-  
lovéd's on earth

Sighed above some lone grave in  
the land of her birth; —

So that one word . . . Lucile! . . .  
stirred the Sœur Seraphine,

For a moment. Anon she resumed  
her serene

And concentrated calm.

"Let the Nun, then, retrace  
The life of the Soldier!" . . . she

said, with a face

That glowed, gladdening her words.  
 "To the present I come :  
 Leave the Past."

There her voice rose, and seemed  
 as when some  
 Pale Priestess proclaims from her  
 temple the praise  
 Of the hero whose brows she is  
 crowning with bays.

Step by step did she follow his path  
 from the place

Where their two paths diverged.  
 Year by year did she trace  
 (Familiar with all) his, the soldier's  
 existence. [resistance;

Her words were of trial, endurance,  
 Of the leagner around this besieged  
 world of ours :

And the same sentinels that ascend  
 the same towers

And report the same foes, the same  
 fears, the same strife,

Waged alike to the limits of each  
 human life.

She went on to speak of the lone  
 moody lord,

Shut up in his lone moody halls :  
 every word

Held the weight of a tear : she re-  
 corded the good

He had patiently wrought through  
 a whole neighborhood ;

And the blessing that lived on the  
 lips of the poor,

Ay the peasant's hearthstone, or the  
 cottager's door.

There she paused : and her accents  
 seemed dipped in the hue

Of his own sombre heart, as the  
 picture she drew

Of the poor, proud, sad spirit, re-  
 jecting love's wages,

Yet working love's work ; reading  
 backwards life's pages

For penance ; and stubbornly, many  
 a time,

Both missing the moral, and marring  
 the rhyme.

Then she spoke of the soldier ! . . .  
 the man's work and fame.

The pride of a nation, a world's  
 just acclaim !  
 Life's inward approval !

## XXVIII.

Her voice reached his heart,  
 And sank lower. She spoke of her-  
 self : how, apart

And unseen, — far away, — she had  
 watched, year by year,

With how many a blessing, how  
 many a tear,

And how many a prayer, every stage  
 in the strife :

Guessed the thought in the deed :  
 traced the love in the life :

Blessed the man in the man's work !  
 " *Thy* work . . . O, not mine !

Thine, Lucile ! " . . . he exclaimed  
 . . . " all the worth of it thine

If worth there be in it ! "

Her answer conveyed  
 His reward, and her own ; joy that  
 cannot be said

Alone by the voice . . . eyes — face  
 — spoke silently :

All the woman, one grateful emotion !  
 And she

A poor Sister of Charity ! hers a  
 life spent

In one silent effort for others ! . . .  
 She bent

Her divine face above him and filled  
 up his heart

With the look that glowed from it.  
 Then slow, with soft art,

Fixed her aim, and moved to it.

## XXIX.

He, the soldier humane,  
 He, the hero ; whose heart hid in  
 glory the pain

Of a youth disappointed ; whose life  
 had made known

The value of man's life ! . . . that  
 youth overthrown

And retrieved, had it left him no  
 pity for youth

In another ? his own life of strenu-  
 ous truth

Accomplished in act, had it taught  
 him no care  
 For the life of another? . . . O no!  
 everywhere  
 In the camp which she moved  
 through, she came face to face  
 With some noble token, some gener-  
 ous trace  
 Of his active humanity . . .  
 "Well," he replied,  
 "If it be so?"  
 "I come from the solemn bedside  
 Of a man that is dying," she said.  
 "While we speak  
 A life is in jeopardy."  
 "Quick then! you seek  
 Aid or medicine or what?"  
 "'Tis not needed," she said.  
 "Medicine? yes, for the mind! 'Tis  
 a heart that needs aid!  
 You, Eugène de Luvois, you (and  
 you only) can [save it?"  
 Save the life of this man. Will you  
 "What man?  
 How? . . . where? . . . can you ask?"  
 She went rapidly on  
 To her object in brief vivid words  
 . . . The young son  
 Of Matilda and Alfred—the boy  
 lying there  
 Half a mile from that tent-door—  
 the father's despair,  
 The mother's deep anguish—the  
 pride of the boy  
 In the father—the father's one hope  
 and one joy  
 In the son:—the son now—wound-  
 ed, dying! She told  
 Of the father's stern struggle with  
 life: the boy's bold,  
 Pure, and beautiful nature: the fair  
 life before him  
 If that life were but spared . . . yet  
 a word might restore him!  
 The boy's broken love for the niece  
 of Eugène!  
 Its pathos: the girl's love for him;  
 how, half slain  
 In his tent she had found him; won  
 from him the tale;

Sought to nurse back his life; found  
 her efforts still fail;  
 Beaten back by a love that was  
 stronger than life;  
 Of how bravely till then he had  
 stood in that strife  
 Wherein England and France in  
 their best blood, at last,  
 Had bathed from remembrance the  
 wounds of the past.  
 And shall nations be nobler than  
 men? Are not great  
 Men the models of nations? For  
 what is a state  
 But the many's confused imitation  
 of one? [the son  
 Shall he, the fair hero of France on  
 Of his ally seek vengeance, destroy-  
 ing perchance  
 An innocent life,—here when Eng-  
 land and France  
 Have forgiven the sins of their  
 fathers of yore,  
 And baptized a new hope in their  
 sons' recent gore?  
 She went on to tell how the boy had  
 clung still [until  
 To life, for the sake of life's uses,  
 From his weak hands the strong  
 effort dropped, stricken down  
 By the news that the heart of Con-  
 stance, like his own,  
 Was breaking beneath . . .  
 But there, "Hold!" he exclaimed,  
 Interrupting, "forbear!" . . . his  
 whole face was inflamed  
 With the heart's swarthy thunder  
 which yet, while she spoke,  
 Had been gathering silent,—at last  
 the storm broke  
 In grief or in wrath . . .  
 "'Tis to him, then," he cried, . . .  
 Checking suddenly short the tumul-  
 tuous stride.  
 "That I owe these late greetings,  
 — for him you are here,—  
 For his sake you seek me,— for  
 him, it is clear,  
 You have deigned at the last to be-  
 think you again

Of this long-forgotten existence!"  
 "Eugène!"  
 "Ha! fool that I was!" . . . he  
 went on, . . . "and just now,  
 While you spoke yet, my heart was  
 beginning to grow  
 Almost boyish again, almost sure  
 of *one* friend!  
 Yet this was the meaning of all, —  
 this the end!  
 Be it so! There's a sort of slow  
 justice (admit!)  
 In this, — that the word that man's  
 finger hath writ [last.  
 In fire on my heart, I return him at  
 Let him learn that word, — Never!"  
 "Ah, still to the past  
 Must the present be vassal?" she  
 said. "In the hour  
 We last parted I urged you to put  
 forth the power  
 Which I felt to be yours, in the  
 conquest of life.  
 Yours, the promise to strive: mine,  
 — to watch o'er the strife.  
 I foresaw you would conquer; you  
*have* conquered much,  
 Much, indeed, that is noble! I hail  
 it as such, [it. I saw  
 And am here to record and applaud  
 Not the less in your nature, Eugène  
 de Lavois,  
 One peril, — one point where I  
 feared you would fail  
 To subdue that worst foe which a  
 man can assail, —  
 Himself: and I promised that, if I  
 should see  
 My champion once falter, or bend  
 the brave knee,  
 That moment would bring me again  
 to his side.  
 That moment is come! for that  
 peril was pride,  
 And you falter. I plead for your-  
 self, and one other,  
 For that gentle child without father  
 or mother,  
 To whom you are both. I plead,  
 soldier of France,

For your own nobler nature, — and  
 plead for *Constance!*"  
 At the sound of that name he avert-  
 ed his head.  
 "Constance! . . . Ay, she entered  
 my lone life" (he said)  
 "When its sun was long set; and  
 hung over its night  
 Her own starry childhood. I have  
 but that light,  
 In the midst of much darkness.  
 Who names me but she  
 With titles of love? and what rests  
 there for me  
 In the silence of age save the voice  
 of that child? [undefiled!"  
 The child of my own better life,  
 My creature, carved out of my  
 heart of hearts!"  
 "Say,"  
 Said the *Sœur Seraphine*, — "are  
 you able to lay  
 Your hand as a knight on your  
 heart as a man  
 And swear that, whatever may hap-  
 pen, you can  
 Feel assured for the life you thus  
 cherish?"  
 "How so?"  
 He looked up. "If the boy should  
 die thus?"  
 "Yes, I know  
 What your look would imply . . .  
 this sleek stranger forsooth!  
 Because on his cheek was the red  
 rose of youth  
 The heart of my niece must break  
 for it!"  
 She cried,  
 "Nay, but hear me yet further!"  
 With slow heavy stride,  
 Unheeding her words, he was pacing  
 the tent, [he went.  
 He was muttering low to himself as  
 "Ay, these young things lie safe in  
 our heart just so long  
 As their wings are in growing; and  
 when these are strong  
 They break it, and farewell! the  
 bird flies!" . . .

The nun  
Laid her hand on the soldier, and  
murmured, "The sun  
Is descending, life fleets while we  
talk thus! O, yet [set,  
Let this day upon one final victory  
And complete a life's conquest!"

He said, "Understand!  
If *Constance* wed the son of this  
man, by whose hand  
My heart hath been robbed, she is  
lost to my life!  
Can her home be my home? Can I  
claim in the wife

Of that man's son the child of my  
- age? At her side

Shall he stand on my hearth? Shall  
- I sue to the bride

Of . . . enough!

"Ah, and you immemorial halls  
Of my Norman forefathers, whose  
shadow yet falls

On my fancy, and fuses hope, mem-  
ory, past,

Present,—all, in one silence! old  
trees to the blast

Of the North Sea repeating the tale  
of old days,

Nevermore, nevermore in the wild  
bosky ways

Shall I hear through your umbrage  
ancestral the wind

Prophecy as of yore, when it shook  
the deep mind

Of my boyhood, with whispers from  
out the far years

Of love, fame, the raptures life  
cools down with tears!

Henceforth shall the tread of a  
Vargrave alone

Rouse your echoes?" [son

"O, think not," she said, "of the  
Of the man whom unjustly you  
hate; only think

Of this young human creature, that  
cries from the brink

Of a grave to your mercy!

"Recall your own words  
{Words my memory mournfully  
ever records!}

How with love may be wrecked a  
whole life! then, Eugène,  
Look with me (still those words in  
our ears!) once again

At this young soldier sinking from  
life here,—dragged down  
By the weight of the love in his  
heart: no renown,

No fame comforts *him!* nations  
shout not above

The lone grave down to which he  
is bearing the love

Which life has rejected! Will *you*  
stand apart?

You, with such a love's memory  
deep in your heart!

You the hero, whose life hath per-  
chance been led on

Through the deeds it hath wrought  
to the fame it hath won,

By recalling the visions and dreams  
of a youth,

Such as lies at your door now: who  
have but, in truth,

To stretch forth a hand, to speak  
only one word, [life!"

And by that word you rescue a  
He was stirred.

Still he sought to put from him the  
cup; bowed his face

On his hand; and anon, as though  
wishing to chase

With one angry gesture his own  
thoughts aside,

He sprang up, brushed past her,  
and bitterly cried,

"No!—*Constance* wed a Vargrave!  
—I cannot consent!"

Then uprose the *Sœur Seraphine*.  
The low tent

In her sudden uprising, seemed  
dwarfed by the height

From which those imperial eyes  
poured the light [him.

Of their deep silent sadness upon  
No wonder

He felt, as it were, his own stature  
shrink under

The compulsion of that grave re-  
gard! For between



The Duc de Luvois and the Sœur Seraphine

At that moment there rose all the height of one soul

O'er another; she looked down on him from the whole

Lonely length of a life. There were sad nights and days,

There were long months and years in that heart-searching gaze;

And her voice, when she spoke, with sharp pathos thrilled through,

And transfixed him.

"Eugène de Luvois, but for you, I might have been now, — not this wandering nun,

But a mother, a wife, — pleading, not for the son

Of another, but blessing some child of my own,

His, — the man's that I once loved! . . . Hush! that which is done

I regret not. I breathe no reproaches. That's best

Which God sends. 'Twas His will: it is mine. And the rest

Of that riddle I will not look back to. He reads

In your heart, — He that judges of all thoughts and deeds,

With eyes, mine forestall not! This only I say:

You have not the right (read it, you, as you may!)

To say . . . 'I am the wronged.' . . . "Have I wronged thee? — wronged thee!"

He faltered, "Lucile, ah, Lucile!"

"Nay, not me,"

She murmured, "but man! The lone nun standing here

Has no claim upon earth, and is passed from the sphere

Of earth's wrongs and earth's reparations. But she,

The dead woman, Lucile, she whose grave is in me, [to man,

Demands from her grave reparation to God. Heed, O heed,

while you can,

This voice from the grave!"

"Hush!" he moaned, "I obey The Sœur Seraphine. There, Lucile! let this pay

Every debt that is due to that grave. Now lead on:

I follow you, Sœur Seraphine! . . . To the son

Of Lord Alfred Vargrave . . . and then," . . .

As he spoke He lifted the tent-door, and down the dun smoke

Pointed out the dark bastions, with batteries crowned,

Of the city beneath them . . .

"Then, there, underground, And *valeté et plaudite*, soon as may

be!

Let the old tree go down to the earth, — the old tree,

With the worm at its heart! Lay the axe to the root!

Who will miss the old stump, so we save the young shoot?

A Vargrave! . . . this pays all . . . Lead on! . . . in the seed

Save the forest! . . .

"I follow . . . forth, forth! where you lead."

## XXX.

The day was declining; a day sick and damp.

In a blank ghostly glare shone the bleak ghostly camp

Of the English. Alone in his dim, spectral tent

(Himself the wan spectre of youth), with eyes bent

On the daylight departing, the sick man was sitting

Upon his low pallet. These thoughts, vaguely flitting,

Crossed the silence between him and death, which seemed near.

— "Pain o'erreaches itself, so is balked! else, how bear

This intense and intolerable solitude,

With its eye on my heart, and its  
hand on my blood?  
Pulse by pulse! Day goes down:  
yet she comes not again.  
Other suffering, doubtless, where  
hope is more plain,  
Claims her elsewhere. I die, strange!  
and scarcely feel sad.  
Oh, to think of *Constance thus*, and  
not to go mad!  
But Death, it would seem, dulls the  
sense to his own  
Dull doings . . . ”

## XXXI.

Between those sick eyes and the  
sun  
A shadow fell thwart.

## XXXII.

'Tis the pale nun once more!  
But who stands at her side, mute  
and dark in the door?  
How oft had he watched through  
the glory and gloom  
Of the battle, with long, longing  
looks that dim plume  
Which now (one stray sunbeam  
upon it) shook, stooped  
To where the tent-curtain, dividing,  
was looped!  
How that stern face had haunted  
and hovered about  
The dreams it still scared! through  
what fond fear and doubt  
Had the boy yearned in heart to the  
hero! (What's like  
A boy's love for some famous  
man?) . . . Oh, to strike  
A wild path through the battle,  
down striking perchance  
Some rash foeman too near the  
great soldier of France,  
And so fall in his glorious regard!  
. . . Oft, how oft  
Had his heart flashed this hope out,  
whilst watching aloft  
The dim battle that plume dance  
and dart, — never seen  
So near till this moment! how  
eager to glean

Every stray word, dropped through  
the camp-babble in praise  
Of his hero, — each tale of old ven-  
turous days  
In the desert! And now . . . could  
he speak out his heart  
Face to face with that man ere he  
died!

## XXXIII.

With a start  
The sick soldier sprang up: the  
blood sprang up in him,  
To his throat, and o'erthrew him:  
he reeled back: a dim  
Sanguine haze filled his eyes, in his  
ears rose the din  
And rush, as of cataracts loosened  
within,  
Through which he saw faintly, and  
heard, the pale nun  
(Looking larger than life, where  
she stood in the sun)  
Point to him and murmur, “Be-  
hold!” Then that plume  
Seemed to wave like a fire, and fade  
off in the gloom  
Which momentarily put out the world.

## XXXIV.

To his side  
Moved the man the boy dreaded yet  
loved . . . “Ah!” . . . he sighed,  
“The smooth brow, the fair Var-  
grave face! and those eyes,  
All the mother's! The old things  
again!

“Do not rise.  
You suffer, young man?”

THE BOY.

Sir, I die.

THE DUKE.

Not so young!

THE BOY.

So young? yes! and yet I have  
tangled among  
The frayed warp and woof of this  
brief life of mine

Other lives than my own. Could  
 my death but untwine  
 The vest skein . . . but it will not.  
 Yes, Duke, young—so young!  
 And I knew you not? yet I have  
 done you a wrong  
 Irreparable! . . . late, too late to  
 repair.

If I knew any means . . . but I  
 know none! . . . I swear,  
 If this broken fraction of time  
 could extend [end  
 Into infinite lives of atonement, no  
 Would seem too remote for my grief  
 (could that be!)  
 To include it! Not too late, how-  
 ever, for me  
 To entreat: is it too late for you  
 to forgive?

THE DUKE.

You wrong — my forgiveness — ex-  
 plain.

THE BOY.

Could I live!  
 Such a very few hours left to life,  
 yet I shrink,  
 I falter! . . . Yes, Duke, your for-  
 giveness I think  
 Should free my soul hence.

Ah! you could not surmise  
 That a boy's beating heart, burning  
 thoughts, longing eyes  
 Were following you evermore (heed-  
 ed not!)

While the battle was flowing be-  
 tween us: nor what  
 Eager, dubious footsteps at night-  
 fall oft went

With the wind and the rain, round  
 and round your blind tent,  
 Persistent and wild as the wind and  
 the rain,

Unnoticed as these, weak as these,  
 and as vain!

Oh, how obdurate then looked your  
 tent! The waste air

Grew stern at the gleam which said  
 . . . "Off! he is there!"

I know not what merciful mystery  
 now

Brings you here, whence the man  
 whom you see lying low  
 Other footsteps (not those!) must  
 soon bear to the grave.  
 But death is at hand, and the few  
 words I have  
 Yet to speak, I must speak them at  
 once.

Duke, I swear,  
 As I lie here (Death's angel too  
 close not to hear!)  
 That I meant not this wrong to you.  
 Duc de Luvois,  
 I loved your niece — loved? why, I  
*love* her! I saw,  
 And, seeing, how could I but love  
 her? I seemed  
 Born to love her. Alas, were that  
 all! had I dreamed  
 Of this love's cruel consequence as  
 it rests now

Ever fearfully present before me, I  
 vow  
 That the secret, unknown, had gone  
 down to the tomb  
 Into which I descend . . . O why,  
 whilst there was room  
 In life left for warning, had no one  
 the heart

To warn me? Had any one whis-  
 pered . . . "Depart!"

To the hope the whole world seemed  
 in league then to nurse!

Had any one hinted . . . "Beware  
 of the curse

Which is coming!" There was not  
 a voice raised to tell,

Not a hand moved to warn from  
 the blow ere it fell,

And then . . . then the blow fell  
 on *both!* This is why

I implore you to pardon that great  
 injury

Wrought on her, and, through her,  
 wrought on you, Heaven knows

How unwittingly!

THE DUKE.

Ah! . . . and, young soldier, suppose  
 That I came here to seek, not grant,  
 pardon? —

THE BOY.

Of whom?

THE DUKE.

Of yourself.

THE BOY.

Duke, I bear in my heart to the tomb  
No boyish resentment; not one  
lonely thought  
That honors you not. In all this  
there is nought  
'Tis for me to forgive.

Every glorious act  
Of your great life starts forward,  
an eloquent fact,  
To confirm in my boy's heart its  
faith in your own.

And have I not hoarded, to ponder  
upon,

A hundred great acts from your life?  
Nay, all these,

Were they so many lying and false  
witnesses,

Does there rest not *one* voice, which  
was never untrue?

I believe in Constance, Duke, as she  
does in you!

In this great world around us, wher-  
ever we turn,

Some grief irremediable we discern;  
And yet—there sits God, calm in  
Heaven above!

Do we trust one whit less in His  
justice or love?

I judge not.

THE DUKE.

Enough! hear at last, then, the truth.  
Your father and I,—foes we were  
in our youth.

It matters not why. Yet thus much  
understand:

The hope of my youth was signed  
out by his hand.

I was not of those whom the buffets  
of fate

Tame and teach: and my heart  
buried slain love in hate.

If your own frank young heart. yet  
unconscious of all

Which turns the heart's blood in its  
springtide to gall,

And unable to guess even aught  
that the furrow

Across these gray brows hides of  
sin or of sorrow,

Comprehends not the evil and grief  
of my life,

'Twill at least comprehend how in-  
tense was the strife

Which is closed in this act of atone-  
ment, whereby

I seek in the son of my youth's  
enemy

The friend of my age. Let the  
present release

Here acquitted the past! In the  
name of my niece,

Whom for my life in yours as a  
hostage I give,

Are you great enough, boy, to for-  
give me,—and live?

Whilst he spoke thus, a doubtful  
tumultuous joy

Chased its fleeting effects o'er the  
face of the boy:

As when some stormy moon, in a  
long cloud confined,

Struggles outward through shadows,  
the varying wind

Alternates, and bursts, self-sur-  
prised, from her prison,

So that slow joy grew clear in his  
face. He had risen

To answer the Duke; but strength  
failed every limb;

A strange happy feebleness trembled  
through him.

With a faint cry of rapturous won-  
der, he sank [near.

On the breast of the nun, who stood  
"Yes, boy! thank

This guardian angel," the Duke said,  
"I—you,

We owe all to her. Crown her work.  
Live! be true

To your young life's fair promise,  
and live for her sake!"

"Yes, Duke: I will live. I *must*  
live,—live to make

My whole life the answer you  
claim," the boy said,  
"For joy does not kill!"

Back again the faint head  
Declined on the nun's gentle bosom.

She saw  
His lips quiver, and motioned the  
Duke to withdraw

And leave them a moment together.

He eyed  
Them both with a wistful regard;  
turned, and sighed,

And lifted the tent-door, and passed  
from the tent.

## XXXV.

Like a furnace, the fervid, intense  
occident

From its hot seething levels a great  
glare struck up

On the sick metal sky. And, as out  
of a cup [portents arise,

Some witch watches boiling wild  
Monstrous clouds, massed, misshap-  
en, and tinged with strange  
dyes,

Hovered over the red fume, and  
changed to weird shapes

As of snakes, salamanders, efts, liz-  
ards, storks, apes,

Chimeras, and hydras: whilst —  
ever the same —

In the midst of all these (creatures  
fused by his flame,

And changed by his influence!)  
changeless, as when,

Ere he lit down to death genera-  
tions of men,

O'er that crude and ungainly crea-  
tion, which there

With wild shapes this cloud-world  
seemed to mimic in air,

The eye of Heaven's all-judging  
witness, he shone,

And shall shine on the ages we  
reach not, — the sun!

## XXXVI.

Nature posted her parable thus in  
the skies,

And the man's heart bore witness.  
Life's vapors arise

And fall, pass and change, group  
themselves and revolve

Round the great central life, which  
is Love: these dissolve

And resume themselves, here as-  
sume beauty, there terror;

And the phantasmagoria of infinite  
error,

And endless complexity, lasts but a  
while;

Life's self, the immortal, immutable  
smile

Of God, on the soul, in the deep  
heart of Heaven

Lives changeless, unchanged: and  
our morning and even

Are earth's alterations, not Heaven's.

## XXXVII.

While he yet  
Watched the skies, with this thought  
in his heart; while he set

Thus unconsciously all his life forth  
in his mind,

Summed it up, searched it out,  
proved it vapor and wind,

And embraced the new life which  
that hour had revealed, —

Love's life, which earth's life had  
defaced and concealed;

Lucile left the tent and stood by him.

Her tread  
Aroused him; and, turning towards  
her, he said:

"O Sœur Seraphine, are you  
happy?"

"Eugène,  
What is happier than to have hoped  
not in vain?"

She answered, — "And you?"

"Yes."

"You do not repent?"

"No."  
"Thank Heaven!" she mur-  
mured. He musingly bent  
His looks on the sunset, and some-  
what apart

Where he stood, sighed, as though  
to his innermost heart,

"O blessed are they, amongst whom  
I was not,

Whose morning unclouded, without  
 stain or spot,  
 Predicts a pure evening; who, sun-  
 like, in light  
 Have traversed, unsullied, the world,  
 and set bright!"

But she in response, "Mark you  
 ship far away,  
 Asleep on the wave, in the last light  
 of day,  
 With all its hushed thunders shut  
 up! Would you know  
 A thought which came to me a few  
 days ago,  
 Whilst watching those ships? . . .  
 When the great Ship of Life,  
 Surviving, though shattered, the  
 tumult and strife  
 Of earth's angry element, — masts  
 broken short,  
 Decks drenched, bulwarks beaten,  
 — drives safe into port,  
 When the Pilot of Galilee, seen on  
 the strand,  
 Stretches over the waters a welcom-  
 ing hand;  
 When, heeding no longer the sea's  
 baffled roar,  
 The mariner turns to his rest ever-  
 more;  
 What will then be the answer the  
 helmsman must give?  
 Will it be . . . 'Lo, our log-book!  
 Thus once did we live  
 In the zones of the South; thus we  
 traversed the seas  
 Of the Orient; there dwelt with the  
 Hesperides;  
 Thence followed the west-wind;  
 here, eastward we turned;  
 The stars failed us there; just here  
 land we discerned  
 On our lee; there the storm over-  
 took us at last;  
 That day went the bowsprit, the  
 next day the mast;  
 There the mermen came round us,  
 and there we saw bask  
 A siren?' The Captain of Port will  
 he ask

Any one of such questions? I can-  
 not think so!  
 But . . . 'What is the last Bill of  
 Health you can show?'  
 Not — How fared the soul through  
 the trials she passed?  
 But — What is the state of that  
 soul at the last?"

"May it be so!" he sighed. "There  
 the sun drops, behold!"  
 And indeed, whilst he spoke, all the  
 purple and gold  
 In the west had turned ashen, save  
 one fading strip  
 Of light that yet gleamed from the  
 dark nether lip  
 Of a long reef of cloud; and o'er  
 sullen ravines  
 And ridges the raw damps were  
 hanging white screens  
 Of melancholy mist.

"*Nunc dimittis!*" she said.  
 "O God of the living! whilst yet  
 'mid the dead  
 And the dying we stand here alive,  
 and thy days  
 Returning, admit space for prayer  
 and for praise,  
 In both these confirm us!  
 "The helmsman, Eugène,  
 Needs the compass to steer by.  
 Pray always. Again  
 We two part: each to work out  
 Heaven's will: you, I trust,  
 In the world's ample witness; and  
 I, as I must,  
 In secret and silence: you, love,  
 fame, await;  
 Me, sorrow and sickness. We meet  
 at one gate  
 When all's over. The ways they  
 are many and wide,  
 And seldom are two ways the same.  
 Side by side  
 May we stand at the same little  
 door when all's done!  
 The ways they are many, the end it  
 is one.  
 He that knocketh shall enter: who  
 asks shall obtain:

And who seeketh, he findeth. Remember, Eugène!"  
 She turned to depart.  
 "Whither? whither?" . . . he said.  
 She stretched forth her hand where, already outspread  
 On the darkened horizon, remotely they saw  
 The French camp-fires kindling.  
 "O Duc de Luvois,  
 See yonder vast host, with its manifold heart  
 Made as one man's by one hope!  
 That hope 'tis your part  
 To aid towards achievement, to save from reverse:  
 Mine, through suffering to soothe, and through sickness to nurse.  
 I go to my work: you to yours."

## XXXVIII.

Whilst she spoke,  
 On the wide wasting evening there distantly broke  
 The low roll of musketry. Straightway, anon,  
 From the dim Flag-staff Battery bellowed a gun.  
 "Our chasseurs are at it!" he muttered.

She turned,  
 Smiled, and passed up the twilight.  
 He faintly discerned  
 Her form, now and then, on the flat lurid sky  
 Rise, and sink, and recede through the mists; by and by  
 The vapors closed round, and he saw her no more.

## XXXIX.

Nor shall we. For her mission, accomplished, is o'er.  
 The mission of genius on earth!  
 To uplift,  
 Purify, and confirm by its own gracious gift,  
 The world, in despite of the world's dull endeavor

To degrade, and drag down, and oppose it forever.  
 The mission of genius: to watch, and to wait,  
 To renew, to redeem, and to regenerate.  
 The mission of woman on earth! to give birth  
 To the mercy of Heaven descending on earth.  
 The mission of woman: permitted to bruise  
 The head of the serpent, and sweetly infuse,  
 Through the sorrow and sin of earth's registered curse,  
 The blessing which mitigates all; born to nurse,  
 And to soothe, and to solace, to help and to heal  
 The sick world that leans on her.  
 This was Lucile.

## XL.

A power hid in pathos: a fire veiled in cloud:  
 Yet still burning outward: a branch which, though bowed  
 By the bird in its passage, springs upward again:  
 Through all symbols I search for her sweetness — in vain!  
 Judge her love by her life. For our life is but love  
 In act. Pure was hers: and the dear God above,  
 Who knows what His creatures have need of for life,  
 And whose love includes all loves, through much patient strife  
 Led her soul into peace. Love, though love may be given  
 In vain, is yet lovely. Her own native heaven  
 More clearly she mirrored, as life's troubled dream  
 Wore away; and love sighed into rest, like a stream  
 That breaks its heart over wild rocks toward the shore

<p>Of the great sea which hushes it up evermore With its little wild wailing. No stream from its source Flows seaward, how lonely soever its course, But what some land is gladdened. No star ever rose And set, without influence some- where. Who knows What earth needs from earth's low- est creature? No life Can be pure in its purpose and strong in its strife And all life not be purer and strong- er thereby. The spirits of just men made per- fect on high, The army of martyrs who stand by the Throne And gaze into the Face that makes glorious their own, Know this, surely, at last. Honest love, honest sorrow, Honest work for the day, honest hope for the morrow,</p>	<p>Are these worth nothing more than the hand they make weary, The heart they have saddened, the life they leave dreary? Hush! the sevenfold heavens to the voice of the Spirit Echo: He that o'ercometh shall all things inherit.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">XLI.</p> <p>The moon was, in fire, carried up through the fog; The loud fortress barked at her like a chained dog. The horizon pulsed flame, the air sounded. All without, War and winter, and twilight, and terror, and doubt; All within, light, warmth, calm! In the twilight, long while Eugène de Lavois with a deep, thoughtful smile Lingered, looking, and listening, lone by the tent. At last he withdrew, and night closed as he went.</p>
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## THE APPLE OF LIFE.

FROM the river Euphrates, the river whose source is in Paradise, far  
As red Egypt,—sole lord of the land and the sea, 'twixt the home of the  
star  
That is born in the blush of the East, and the porch of the chambers of  
rest  
Where the great sea is girded with fire, and Orion returns in the West,  
And the ships come and go in grand silence,—King Solomon reigned.  
And behold,  
In that time there was everywhere silver as common as stones be, and  
gold  
That for plenty was 'counted as silver, and cedar as sycamore-trees  
'That are found in the vale, for abundance. For GOD to the King gave  
all these,  
With glory exceeding; moreover all kings of the earth to him came,  
Because of his wisdom, to hear him. So great was King Solomon's  
fame.



And for all this the King's soul was sad. And his heart said within him, "Alas!  
 For man dies! if his glory abideth, himself from his glory shall pass.  
 And that which remaineth behind him, he seeth it not any more:  
 For how shall he know what comes after, who knoweth not what went before?  
 I have planted me gardens and vineyards, and gotten me silver and gold,  
 And my hand from whatever my heart hath desired I did not withhold:  
 And what profit have I in the works of my hands which I take not away?  
 I have searched out wisdom and knowledge: and what do they profit me, they?  
 As the fool dieth, so doth the wise. What is gathered is scattered again.  
 As the breath of the beasts, even so is the breath of the children of men:  
 And the same thing befalleth them both. And not any man's soul is his own."

This he thought, as he sat in his garden and watched the great sun going down  
 In the glory thereof; and the earth and the sky by the beam of the same  
 Were clothed with the gladness of color, and bathed in the beauty of flame.  
 And "Behold," said the King, "in a moment the glory shall vanish!"  
 Even then,  
 While he spake, he was 'ware of a man drawing near him, who seemed to his ken  
 (By the hair in its blackness like flax that is burned in the hemp-dresser's shed,  
 And the brow's smoky hue, and the smouldering eyeball more livid than lead)  
 As the sons of the land that lies under the sword of the cherub whose wing  
 Wraps in wrath the shut gateways of Paradise. He, being come to the King,  
 Seven times made obeisance before him. To whom, "What art thou,"  
 the King cried,  
 "That thus unannounced to King Solomon comest?" The man, spreading wide  
 The palm of his right hand, showed in it an apple yet bright from the Tree  
 In whose stem springs the life never-failing which Sin lost to Adam, when he,  
 Tasting knowledge forbidden, found death in the fruit of it. . . . So doth the Giver  
 Evil gifts to the evil apportion. And "Hail! let the King live forever!"  
 Bowing down at the feet of the monarch, and laughingly, even as one  
 Whose meaning, in joy or in jest, hovers hid 'twixt the word and the tone,  
 Said the stranger, "For lo ye" (and lightly he dropped in the hand of the King  
 That apple), "from 'twixt the four rivers of Eden, God gave me to bring

To his servant King Solomon, even to my lord that on Israel's throne  
 He hath 'stablish't, this fruit from the Tree in whose branch Life abideth:  
 for none  
 Shall taste death, having tasted this apple."

And therewith he vanished.

Remained  
 In the hand of the King the life-apple : ambrosial of breath, golden-grained,  
 Rosy-bright as a star dipt in sunset. The King turned it o'er, and perused.  
 The fruit, which, alluring his lip, in his hand lay untasted.

He mused,  
 "Life is good : but not life in itself. Life eternal, eternally young,  
 That were life to be lived, or desired! Well it were if a man could prolong  
 The manhood that moves in the muscles, the rapture that mounts in the  
 brain

When life at the prime, in the pastime of living, led on by the train  
 Of the jubilant senses, exulting goes forth, brave of body and spirit,  
 To conquer, choose, claim, and enjoy what 'twas born to achieve or inherit.  
 The dance, and the festal procession! the pride in the strenuous play  
 Of the sinews that, pliant of power, the will, though it wanton, obey!  
 When the veins are yet wishful, and in them the bountiful impulses beat,  
 When the lilies of Love are yet living, the roses of Beauty yet sweet :  
 And the eye glows with glances that kindle, the lip breathes the warmth  
 that inspires,

And the hand hath yet vigor to seize the good thing which the spirit desires!  
 O well for the foot that bounds forward! and ever the wind it awakes  
 Lifts no lock from the forehead yet white, not a leaf that is withered yet  
 shakes

From the loose crown that laughs on young tresses! and ever the earth  
 and the skies

Are crammed with audacious contingencies, measureless means of surprise!  
 Life is sweet to the young that yet know not what life is. But life,  
 after Youth,

The gay liar, leaves hold of the bauble, and Age, with his terrible truth,  
 Picks it up, and perceives it is broken, and knows it unfit to engage  
 The care it yet craves. . . . Life eternal, eternally wedded to Age!

What gain were in that? Why should any man seek what he loathes to  
 prolong?

The twilight that darkens the eyeball : the dull ear that's deaf to the song,  
 When the maidens rejoice and the bride to the bridegroom, with music,  
 is lead :

The palsy that shakes 'neath the blossoms that fall from the chill bridal bed.  
 When the hand saith '*I did,*' not '*I will do,*' the heart saith '*It was,*' not  
 '*It will be,*'

Too late in man's life is Forever, — too late comes this apple to me!"  
 Then the King rose. And lo, it was evening. And leaning, because he  
 was old,

On the sceptre that, curiously sculptured in ivory garnished with gold,  
 To others a rod of dominion, to him was a staff for support,  
 Slow paced he the murmurous pathways where myrtles, in court up to court,  
 Mixt with roses in garden on garden, were ranged around fountains that fed

With cool music green odorous twilights : and so, never lifting his head  
To look up from the way he walked wearily, he to the House of his Pride  
Reascended, and entered.

In cluster, high lamps, spices, odors, each side  
Burning inward and onward, from cinnamon ceilings, down distances vast  
Of voluptuous vistas, illumined deep halls through whose silentness passed  
King Solomon sighing ; where columns colossal stood, gathered in groves  
As the trees of the forest in Libanus, — there where the wind, as it moves,  
Whispers, “ I, too, am Solomon’s servant ! ” — huge trunks hid in gar-  
lands of gold,

On whose tops the skilled sculptors of Sidon had granted men’s gaze to  
behold

How the phoenix that sits on the cedar’s lone summit ’mid fragrance and fire,  
Ever dying, and living, hath loaded with splendors her funeral pyre ;  
How the stork builds her nest on the pine-top ; the date from the palm-  
branch depends ;

And the aloe’s great blossom bursts, crowning with beauty the life that  
it ends. [eyed,

And from hall on to hall, in the doors, mute, magnificent slaves, watchful  
Bowed to the earth as King Solomon passed them. And, passing, King  
Solomon sighed.

And, from hall on to hall pacing feebly, the king mused . . . “ O fair  
Shulamite !

Thy beauty is brighter than starlight on Hebron when Hebron is bright,  
Thy sweetness is sweeter than Carmel. The King rules the nations ; but  
thou,

Thou rulest the King, my Belovéd.”

So murmured King Solomon low  
To himself, as he passed through the portal of porphyry, that dripped,  
as he passed

From the myrrh-sprinkled wreaths on the locks and the lintels ; and en-  
tered at last,

Still sighing, the sweet cedarn chamber, contrived for repose and delight,  
Where the beautiful Shulamite slumbered. And straightway, to left and  
to right,

Bowing down as he entered, the Spirits in bondage to Solomon, there  
Keeping watch o’er his love, sank their swords, spread their wings, and  
vanished in air.

The King with a kiss woke the sleeper. And, showing the fruit in his hand,  
“ Behold ! this was brought me erewhile by one coming,” he said, “ from  
the land

That lies under the sword of the Cherub. ’Twas pluckt by strange hands  
from the Tree

Of whose fruit whoso tastes lives forever. And therefore I bring it to thee,  
My Belovéd. For thou of the daughters of women are fairest. And lo,  
I, the King, I that love thee, whom men of man’s sons have called wisest,  
I know

That in knowledge is sorrow. Much thought is much care. In the  
beauty of youth,

Not the wisdom of age, is enjoyment. Nor spring, is it sweeter, in truth,  
Than winter to roses once withered. The garment, though brodered  
with gold,

Fades apace where the moth frets the fibres. So I, in my glory, grow old  
And this life maketh mine (save the bliss of my soul in the beauty of thee)  
No sweetness so great now that greatly unsweet 'twere to lose what to me  
Life prolonged, at its utmost, can promise. But thine, O thou spirit of  
bliss,

Thine is all that the living desire, — youth, beauty, love, joy in all this!  
And O were it not well for the praise of the world to maintain evermore  
This mould of a woman, God's masterwork, made for mankind to adore?  
Wherefore keep thou the gift I resign. Live forever, rejoicing in life!  
And of women unborn yet the fairest shall still be King Solomon's wife."  
So he said, and so dropped in her bosom the apple.

But when he was gone,  
And the beautiful Shulamite, eyeing the gift of the King, sat alone  
With the thoughts the King's words had awakened, as ever she turned  
and perused

The fruit that, alluring her lip, in her hand lay untasted — she mused,  
"Life is good; but not life in itself. So is youth, so is beauty. Mere stuff  
Are all these for Love's usance. To live, it is well; but it is not enough.  
Well, too, to be fair, to be young; but what good is in beauty and youth  
If the lovely and young are not surer than they that be neither, forsooth,  
Young nor lovely, of being beloved? O my love, if thou lovest not me,  
Shall I love my own life? Am I fair, if not fair, Azariah, to thee."  
Then she hid in her bosom the apple. And rose,

And, reversing the ring  
That, inscribed with the word that works wonders, and signed with the  
seal of the King,  
Compels even spirits to obedience — (for she, for a plaything, erewhile  
From King Solomon's awful forefinger, had won it away with a smile) —  
The beautiful Shulamite folded her veil o'er her forehead and eyes,  
And unseen from the sweet cedarn chamber, unseen through the long  
galleries,

Unseen from the palace, she passed, and passed down to the city unseen,  
Unseen passed the green garden wicket, the vineyard, the cypresses green,  
And stood by the doors of the house of the Prince Azariah. And cried,  
In the darkness she cried, — "Azariah, awaken! ope, ope to me wide,  
Ope the door, ope the lattice! Arise! Let me in, O my love! It is I.  
I, the bride of King Solomon, love thee. Love, tarry not. Love, shall  
I die

At thy doors? I am sick of desire. For my love is more comely than  
gold.

More precious to me is my love than the throne of a king that is old.  
Behold, I have passed through the city, unseen of the watchmen. I stand  
By the doors of the house of my love, till my love lead me in by the hand."  
Azariah arose. And unbolted the door to the fair Shulamite.

"O my queen, what dear folly is this, that hath led thee alone, and by  
night,

To the house of King Solomon's servant? For lo you, the watchmen  
awake.

And much for my own, O my queen, must I fear, and much more for thy  
sake.

For at that which is done in the chamber the leek on the house-top shall  
peep :

And the hand of a king it is heavy : the eyes of a king never sleep :  
But the bird of the air beareth news to the king, and the stars of the sky  
Are as soldiers by night on the turrets. I fear, O my queen, lest we die."  
"Fear thou not. O my love! Azariah, fear nothing. For lo, what I  
bring!

'Tis the fruit of the Tree that in Paradise God hideth under the wing  
Of the Cherub that chased away Adam. And whoso this apple doth eat  
Shall live—live forever! And since unto me my own life is less sweet  
Than thy love, Azariah, (sweet only my life is if thou lovest me!)  
Therefore eat! Live, and love, for life's sake, still, the love that gives  
life unto thee!

Then she held to his lips the life-apple, and kissed him.

But soon as alone,  
Azariah leaned out from his lattice, he muttered, "'Tis well! She is  
gone."

While the fruit in his hand lay untasted. "Such visits," he mused, "may  
cost dear.

In the love of the great is great danger, much trouble, and care more  
than cheer."

Then he laughed and stretched forth his strong arms. For he heard  
from the streets of the city

The song of the women that sing in the doors after dark their love ditty.  
And the clink of the wine-cup, the voice of the wanton, the tripping of  
feet,

And the laughter of youths running after, allured him. And "*Life, it  
is sweet*

*While it lasts,*" sang the women, "*and sweeter the good minute, in that it  
goes.*

*For who, if the rose bloomed forever, so greatly would care for the rose?  
Wherefore haste! pluck the time in the blossom.*" The prince mused,  
"The counsel is well."

And the fruit to his lips he uplifted : yet paused. "Who is he that can  
tell

What his days shall bring forth? Life forever . . . But what sort of  
life? Ah, the doubt!"

'Neath his cloak then he thrust back the apple. And opened the door  
and passed out

To the house of the harlot Egyptian. And mused, as he went, "Life is  
good :

But not life in itself. It is well while the wine-cup is hot in the blood,  
And a man goeth whither he listeth, and doeth the thing that he will,  
And liveth his life as he lusteth, and taketh in freedom his fill  
Of the pleasure that pleaseth his humor, and feareth no snare by the way  
Shall I care to be loved by a queen, if my pride with my freedom I pay?

Better far is a handful in quiet than both hands, though filled to o'erflow  
With pride, in vexation of spirit. And sweeter the roses that blow  
From the wild seeds the wind, where he wanders, with heedless beneficence flings,

Than those that are guarded by dragons to brighten the gardens of kings.  
Let a man take his chance, and be happy. The hart by the hunter pursued,

That far from the herd on the hill-top bounds swift through the blue solitude,

Is more to be envied, though Death with his dart follow fast to destroy,  
Than the tame beast that, pent in the paddock, tastes neither the danger nor joy

Of the mountain, and all its surprises. The main thing is, not to live long,

But to *live*. Better moments of rapture soon ended than ages of wrong.  
Life's feast is best spiced by the flavor of death in it. Just the one chance  
To lose it to-morrow the life that a man lives to-day doth enhance.

The may-be for me, not the must-be! Best flourish while flourish the flowers, [powers?

And fall ere the frost falls. The dead, do they rest or arise with new  
Either way, well for them. Mine, meanwhile, be the cup of life's fulness to-night.

And to-morrow . . . Well, time to consider" (he felt at the fruit).  
"What delight

Of his birthright had Esau, when hungry? To-day with its pottage is sweet.

For a man cannot feed and be full on the faith of to-morrow's baked meat.

Open! open, my dark-eyed beguiler of darkness."

Up rose to his knock,  
Light of foot, the lascivious Egyptian, and lifted the latch from the lock,  
And opened. And led in the prince to her chamber, and shook out her hair,

Dark, heavy, and humid with odors; her bosom beneath it laid bare,  
And sleek fallow shoulder; and sloped back her face, as, when falls the slant South

In wet whispers of rain, flowers bend to catch it; so she, with shut mouth

Half-unfolded for kisses; and sank, as they fell, 'twixt his knees, with a laugh,

On the floor, in a flood of deep hair flung behind her full throat; held him half [lay,

Aloof with one large, languid arm, while the other unpropped, where she  
Limbs flowing in fulness and lucid in surface as waters at play,  
Though in firmness as slippery marble. Anon she sprang loose from his clasp,

And whirled from the table a flagon of silver twined round by an asp  
That glittered, — rough gold and red rubies; and poured him, and praised him, the wine

Wherewith she first brightened the moist lip that murmured, "Ha, fool!  
art thou mine?"

I am thine. This will last for an hour." Then, humming strange words  
of a song,

Sung by maidens in Memphis the old, when they bore the Crowned Image  
along,

Apples yellow and red from a basket with vine-leaves o'erlaid she 'gan take,  
And played with, peeled, tost them, and caught them, and bit them, for  
idleness' sake;

But the rinds on the floor she flung from her, and laughed at the figures  
they made,

As her foot pusht them this way and that way together. And "Look,  
fool," she said,

"It is all sour fruit, this! But those I fling from me, — see here by the  
stain! —

Shall carry the mark of my teeth in their flesh. Could they feel but the  
O my soul, how these teeth should go through them! Fool, fool, what  
good gift dost thou bring?

For thee have I sweetened with cassia my chambers." "A gift for a king,"  
Azariah laughed loud; and tost to her the apple. "This comes from the  
Tree

Of whose fruit whoso tastes lives forever. I care not. I give it to thee.  
Nay, witch! 'tis worth more than the shekels of gold thou hast charmed  
from my purse.

Take it. Eat, and thank me for the meal, witch! for Eve, thy sly mother,  
fared worse,

O thou white-toothéd taster of apples!" "Thou liest, fool!" "Taste,  
then, and try.

For the truth of the fruit's in the eating. 'Tis thou art the serpent, not I."  
And the strong man laughed loud as he pushed at her lip the life-apple.

She caught  
And held it away from her, musing; and muttered . . . "Go to! It is  
naught.

Fool, why dost thou laugh?" And he answered, "Because, witch, it  
tickles my brain

Intensely to think that all we, that be Something while yet we remain,  
We, the princes of people, — ay, even the King's self, — shall die in our day,  
And thou, that art Nothing, shalt sit on our graves, with our grandsous,  
and play."

So he said, and laughed louder.

But when, in the gray of the dawn, he was gone,  
And the wan light waxed large in the window, as she on her bed sat  
alone,

With the fruit that, alluring her lip, in her hand lay untasted, perusing,  
Perplexed, the gay gift of the Prince, the dark woman thereat fell a musing,  
And she thought . . . "What is Life without Honor? And what can the  
life that I live

Give to me, I shall care to continue, not caring for aught it can give?  
I, despising the fools that despise me, — a plaything not pleasing myself, —  
Whose life, for the pelf that maintains it, must sell what is paid not by pelf?

I? . . . the man called me Nothing. He said well. 'The great in their glory must go.'

And why should I linger, whose life leadeth nowhere?—a life which I know

To name is to shame—struck, unsexed, by the world from its list of the lives

Of the women whose womanhood, saved, gets them leave to be mothers and wives.

And the fancies of men change. And bitterly bought is the bread that I eat;

For, though purchased with body and spirit, when purchased 'tis yet all unsweet."

Her tears fell: they fell on the apple. She sighed . . . "Sour fruit, like the rest!

Let it go with the salt tears upon it. Yet life . . . it were sweet if possessed

In the power thereof, and the beauty. 'A gift for a king' . . . did he [say?

Ay, a king's life is a life as it should be, — a life like the light of the day, Wherein all that liveth rejoiceth. For is not the King as the sun

That shineth in heaven and seemeth both heaven and itself all in one? Then to whom may this fruit, the life-giver, be worthily given? Not me.

Nor the fool Azariah that sold it for folly. The King! only he, — Only he hath the life that's worth living forever. Whose life, not alone

Is the life of the King, but the life of the many made mighty in one. To the King will I carry this apple. And he (for the hand of a king

Is a fountain of hope) in his handmaid shall honor the gift that I bring. And men for this deed shall esteem me, with Rahab by Israel praised,

As first among those who, though lowly, their shame into honor have raised:

Such honor as lasts when life goes, and, while life lasts, shall lift it above What, if loved by the many I loathe, must be loathed by the few I could love."

So she rose, and went forth through the city. And with her the apple she bore

In her bosom: and stood 'mid the multitude, waiting therewith in the door

Of the hall where the King, to give judgment, ascended at morning his throne:

And, kneeling there, cried, "Let the King live forever! Behold, I am one

Whom the vile of themselves count the vilest. But great is the grace of my lord.

And now let my lord on his handmaid look down, and give ear to her word."

Thereat, in the witness of all, she drew forth, and (uplifting her head) Showed the Apple of Life, which who tastes, tastes not death. "And

this apple," she said,

"Last night was delivered to me, that thy servant should eat, and not die, But I said to the soul of thy servant, 'Not so. For behold, what am I?



That the King, in his glory and gladness, should cease from the light of  
 the sun,  
 Whiles I, that am least of his slaves, in my shame and abasement live on.  
 For not sweet is the life of thy servant, unless to thy servant my lord  
 Stretch his hand, and show favor. For surely the frown of a king is a  
 sword,  
 But the smile of the King is as honey that flows from the clefts of the  
 rock,  
 And his grace is as dew that from Horeb descends on the heads of the  
 flock :  
 In the King is the heart of a host : the King's strength is an army of men :  
 And the wrath of the King is a lion that roareth by night from his den :  
 But as grapes from the vines of En-Gedi are favors that fall from his  
 hands,  
 And as towers on the hill-tops of Shenir the throne of King Solomon  
 stands.  
 And for this, it were well that forever the King, who is many in one,  
 Should sit, to be seen through all time, on a throne 'twixt the moon and  
 the sun !  
 For how shall one lose what he hath not? Who hath, let him keep what  
 he hath,  
 Wherefore I to the King give this apple."

Then great was King Solomon's wrath.  
 And he rose, rent his garment, and cried, "Woman, whence came this  
 apple to thee?"  
 But when he was 'ware of the truth, then his heart was awakened. And he  
 Knew at once that the man who, erewhile, unawares coming to him, had  
 brought  
 That Apple of Life was, indeed, God's good Angel of Death. And he  
 thought  
 "In mercy, I doubt not, when man's eyes were opened, and made to see  
 plain  
 All the wrong in himself, and the wretchedness, God sent to close them  
 again  
 For man's sake, his last friend upon earth — Death, the servant of God,  
 who is just.  
 Let man's spirit to Him whence it cometh return, and his dust to the  
 dust!"

Then the Apple of Life did King Solomon seal in an urn that was signed  
 With the seal of Oblivion: and summoned the Spirits that walk in the  
 wind  
 Unseen on the summits of mountains, where never the eagle yet flew ;  
 And these he commanded to bear far away, — out of reach, out of view,  
 Out of hope, out of memory, — higher than Ararat buildeth his throne,  
 In the Urn of Oblivion the Apple of Life.

But on green jasper-stone  
 Did the King write the story thereof for instruction. And Enoch, the seer,  
 Coming afterward, searched out the meaning. And he that hath ears, let  
 him hear.

# THE WANDERER.

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## DEDICATION.

To J. F.

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As, in the laurel's murmurous leaves  
'Twas fabled, once, a Virgin dwelt;  
Within the poet's page yet heaves  
The poet's Heart, and loves or grieves  
Or triumphs, as it felt.

A human spirit here records  
The annals of its human strife.  
A human hand hath touched these  
chords.  
These songs may all be idle words:  
And yet—they once were life.

I gave my harp to Memory.  
She sung of hope, when hope was  
young,  
Of youth, as youth no more may be;  
And, since she sung of youth, to  
thee,  
Friend of my youth, she sung.

For all youth seeks, all manhood  
needs,  
All youth and manhood rarely  
find:  
A strength more strong than codes  
or creeds,  
In lofty thoughts and lovely deeds  
Revealed to heart and mind;

A staff to stay, a star to guide;  
A spell to soothe, a power to raise;  
A faith by fortune firmly tried;  
A judgment resolute to preside  
O'er days at strife with days.

O large in lore, in nature sound!  
O man to me, of all men, dear!  
All these in thine my life hath found,  
And forced to tread the rugged ground  
Of daily toil, with cheer.

Accept—not these, the broken cries  
Of days receding far from me—  
But all the love that in them lies,  
The man's heart in the melodies,  
The man's heart honoring thee!

Sighing I sung; for some sublime  
Emotion made my music jar:  
The forehead of this restless time  
Pales in a fervid, passionate clime,  
Lit by a changeful star;

And o'er the Age's threshold, traced  
In characters of hectic fire,  
The name of that keen, fervent-faced  
And toiling seraph, hath been placed  
Which men have called Desire.

But thou art strong where, even of  
old,

The old heroic strength was rare  
In high emotions self-controlled,  
And insight keen, but never cold,  
To lay all falsehood bare;

Despising all those glittering lies  
Which in these days can fool man-  
kind;

But full of noble sympathies  
For what is genuinely wise,  
And beautiful, and kind.

And thou wilt pardon all the much  
Of weakness which doth here  
abound,  
Till music, little prized as such,  
With thee find worth from one true  
touch  
Of nature in its sound.

Though mighty spirits are no more,  
Yet spirits of beauty still remain.  
Gone is the Seer that, by the shore  
Of lakes as limpid as his lore,  
Lived to one ceaseless strain

And strenuous melody of mind.  
But one there rests that hath the  
power [bind  
To charm the midnight moon, and  
All spirits of the sweet south-wind,  
And steal from every shower

That sweeps green England cool and  
clear,

The violet of tender song.  
Great Alfred! long may England's  
ear

His music fill, his name be dear  
To English bosoms long!

And one . . . in sacred silence  
sheathed

That name I keep, my verse would  
shame.

The name my lips in prayer first  
breathed

Was his: and prayer hath yet be-  
queathed

Its silence to that name; —

Which yet an age remote shalt hear,  
Borne on the fourfold wind sub-  
lime [year

By fame, where, with some faded  
These songs shall sink, like leaflets  
sere,

In avenues of Time.

Love on my harp his finger lays;  
His hand is held against the  
chords.

My heart upon the music weighs,  
And, beating, hushes foolish praise  
From desultory words:

And Childhood steals, with wistful  
grace,

'Twixt him and me; an infant  
hand [chase

Chides gently back the thoughts that  
The forward hour, and turns my  
face

To that remembered land

Of legend, and the Summer sky,  
And all the wild Welsh waterfalls,  
And haunts where he, and thou,  
and I

Once wandered with the wandering  
Wye,

And scaled the airy walls

Of Chepstow, from whose ancient  
height

We watched the liberal sun go  
down; [night,

Then onward, through the gradual  
Till, ere the moon was fully bright,

We supped in Monmouth Town.

And though, dear friend, thy love  
retains

The choicest sons of song in fee,  
To thee not less I pour these strains,  
Knowing that in thy heart remains  
A little place for me.

Nor wilt thou all forget the time  
Though it be past, in which to-  
gether,

On many an eve, with many a rhyme  
Of old and modern bards sublime

We soothed the summer weather:

And, citing all he said or sung  
With praise reserved for bards  
like him,

Spake of that friend who dwells  
among

The Apennine, and there hath strung  
A harp of Anakim;

Than whom a mightier master never  
Touched the deep chords of hid-  
den things;

Nor error did from truth dissever  
With keener glance; nor made en-  
deavor

To rise on bolder wings

In those high regions of the soul  
Where thought itself grows dim  
with awe.

But now the star of eve hath stole  
Through the deep sunset, and the  
whole

Of heaven begins to draw

FLORENCE, September 24, 1857.

The darkness round me, and the  
dew,  
And my pale Muse doth fold her  
eyes.

Adieu, my friend; my guide, adieu!  
May never night, 'twixt me and you,  
With thoughts less fond arise!

THE AUTHOR.

## PROLOGUE.

### PART I.

SWEET are the rosy memories of the  
lips,

That first kissed ours, albeit they  
kiss no more :

Sweet is the sight of sunset-sailing  
ships,

Although they leave us on a lonely  
shore :

Sweet are familiar songs, though  
Music dips

Her hollow shell in Thought's  
forlornest wells :

And sweet, though sad, the sound  
of midnight bells,

When the oped casement with the  
night-rain drips.

There is a pleasure which is born of  
pain :

The grave of all things hath its  
violet.

Else why, through days which never  
come again,

Roams Hope with that strange  
longing, like Regret?

Why put the posy in the cold dead  
hand?

Why plant the rose above the  
lonely grave?

Why bring the corpse across the  
salt sea-wave?

Why deem the dead more near in  
native land? [life

Thy name hath been a silence in my  
So long, it falters upon language  
now,

O more to me than sister or than  
wife

Once . . . and now — nothing ! It  
is hard to know

That such things have been, and are  
not, and yet

Life loiters, keeps a pulse at even  
measure,

And goes upon its business and  
its pleasure,

And knows not all the depths of its  
regret.

Thou art not in thy picture, O my  
friend !

The years are sad and many since  
I saw thee,

And seem with me to have survived  
their end.

Far otherwise than thus did mem-  
ory draw thee ;

I ne'er shall know thee other than  
thou wast.

Yet save, indeed, the same sad  
eyes of old,

And that abundant hair's warm  
silken gold,

Thou art changed, if this be like  
the look thou hast.

Changed ! There the epitaph of all  
the years

Was sounded ! I am changed too.  
Let it be.

Yet it is sad to know my latest tears  
Were faithful to a memory, — not  
to thee.

Nothing is left us! nothing—  
save the soul,

Yet even the immortal in us alters  
too.

Who is it his old sensations can  
renew?

Slowly the seas are changed. Slow  
ages roll

The mountains to a level. Nature  
sleeps,

And dreams her dream, and to  
new work awakes

After a hundred years are in the  
deeps.

But Man is changed before a  
wrinkle breaks

The brow's serenity, or the curls  
are gray.

We stand within the flux of sense:  
the near

And far change place: and we see  
nothing clear.

That's false to-morrow which was  
true to-day.

Ah, could the memory cast her spots,  
as do

The snake's brood theirs in spring!  
and be once more

Wholly renewed, to dwell in the time  
that's new,

With no reiteration of those pangs  
of yore.

Peace, peace! My wild song will go  
wandering

Too wantonly, down paths a pri-  
vate pain

Hath trodden bare. What was it  
jarred the strain?

Some crushed illusion, left with  
crumpled wing.

Tangled in Music's web of twined  
strings—

That started that false note, and  
cracked the tune

In its beginning. Ah, forgotten  
things

Stumble back strangely! And the  
ghost of June

Stands by December's fire, cold,  
cold! and puts

The last spark out.

How could I sing aright

With those old airs haunting me all  
the night

And those old steps that sound when  
daylight shuts?

For back she comes, and moves re-  
proachfully,

The mistress of my moods, and  
looks bereft

(Cruel to the last!) as though 'twere  
I, not she,

That did the wrong, and broke the  
spell, and left

Memory comfortless.

Away! away!

Phantoms, about whose brows the  
bindweed clings,

Hopeless regret!

In thinking of these things

Some men have lost their minds,  
and others may.

Yet, O, for one deep draught in this  
dull hour!

One deep, deep draught of the  
departed time;

O, for one brief strong pulse of an-  
cient power,

To beat and breathe through all  
the valves of rhyme!

Thou, Memory, with the downward  
eyes, that art

The cupbearer of gods, pour deep  
and long,

Brim all the vacant chalices of  
song

With health! Droop down thine  
urn.

I hold my heart.

One draught of what I shall not  
taste again,

Save when my brain with thy dark  
wine is brimmed,—

One draught! and then straight on-  
ward, spite of pain,

And spite of all things changed,  
with gaze undimmed.

Love's footsteps through the waning  
 Past to explore  
 Undaunted; and to carve, in the  
 wail light  
 Of Hope's last outposts, on Song's  
 utmost height  
 The sad resemblance of an hour no  
 more.

Midnight, and love, and youth, and  
 Italy!

Love in the land where love most  
 lovely seems!  
 Land of my love, though I be far  
 from thee,  
 Lend, for love's sake, the light of  
 thy moonbeams,  
 The spirit of thy cypress-groves, and  
 all  
 Thy dark-eyed beauty, for a little  
 while  
 To my desire. Yet once more let  
 her smile  
 Fall o'er me: o'er me let her long  
 hair fall,

The lady of my life, whose lovely  
 eyes  
 Dreaming, or waking, lure me. I  
 shall know her  
 By Love's own planet o'er her in the  
 skies,  
 And Beauty's blossom in the grass  
 below her!  
 Dreaming, or waking, in her soft,  
 sad gaze  
 Let my heart bathe, as on that  
 fated night  
 I saw her, when my life took in  
 the sight  
 Of her sweet face for all its nights  
 and days.

Her winsome head was bare: and  
 she had twined  
 Through its rich curls wild red  
 anemones;  
 One stream of her soft hair strayed  
 unconfined  
 Down her ripe cheek, and shad-  
 owed her deep eyes.

The bunch of sword-grass fell from  
 her loose hand.  
 Her modest foot beneath its snowy  
 skirt  
 Peeped, and the golden daisy was  
 not hurt.  
 Stately, yet slight, she stood, as fair-  
 ies stand.

Under the blessed darkness unre-  
 proved  
 We were alone, in that blest hour  
 of time,  
 Which first revealed to us how much  
 we loved,  
 'Neath the thick starlight. The  
 young night sublime  
 Hung trembling o'er us. At her  
 feet I knelt,  
 And gazed up from her feet into  
 her eyes.  
 Her face was bowed: we breathed  
 each other's sighs:  
 We did not speak: not move: we  
 looked: we felt.

The night said not a word. The  
 breeze was dead.  
 The leaf lay without whispering  
 on the tree,  
 As I lay at her feet. Droopt was her  
 head:  
 One hand in mine: and one still  
 pensively  
 Went wandering through my hair.  
 We were together.  
 How? Where? What matter?  
 Somewhere in a dream,  
 Drifting, slow drifting, down a  
 wizard stream:  
 Whither? Together: then what  
 matter whither?

It was enough for me to clasp her  
 hand:  
 To blend with her love-looks my  
 own: no more.  
 Enough (with thoughts like ships  
 that cannot land,  
 Blown by faint winds about a  
 magic shore)

<p>To realize, in each mysterious feeling,          The droop of the warm cheek so near my own :          The cool white arm about my shoulder thrown :          Those exquisite frail feet, where I was kneeling.          How little know they life's divinest bliss,          That know not to possess and yet refrain !          Let the young Psyche roam, a fleeting kiss :—          Grasp it—a few poor grains of dust remain.          See how those floating flowers, the butterflies,          Hover the garden through, and take no root !          Desire forever hath a flying foot.          Free pleasure comes and goes beneath the skies.          Close not thy hand upon the innocent joy          That trusts itself within thy reach.          It may,          Or may not, linger. Thou canst but destroy          The wingéd wanderer. Let it go or stay.          Love thou the rose, yet leave it on its stem.          Think! Midas starved by turning all to gold.          Blesséd are those that spare, and that withhold.          Because the whole world shall be trusted then.          The foolish Faun pursues the unwilling Nymph          That culls her flowers beside the precipice,          Or dips her shining ankles in the lymph :          But, just when she must perish or be his,          Heaven puts an arm out. She is safe. The shore</p>	<p>Gains some new fountain; or the lilled lawn          A rarer sort of rose: but, ah, poor Faun!          To thee she shall be changed forevermore.          Chase not too close the fading rapture. Leave [seen.          To Love his long auroras, slowly          Be ready to release, as to receive.          Deem those the nearest, soul to soul, between          Whose lips yet lingers reverence on a sigh.          Judge what thy sense can reach not, most thine own,          If once thy soul hath seized it.          The unknown          Is life to love, religion, poetry.          The moon had set. There was not any light,          Save of the lonely legioned watch-stars pale [bright          In outer air, and what by fits made          Hot oleanders in a rosy vale          Searched by the lamping fly, whose little spark          Went in and out, like passion's bashful hope.          Meanwhile the sleepy globe began to slope          A ponderous shoulder sunward through the dark.          And the night passed in beauty like a dream.          Aloof in these dark heavens paused Destiny,          With her last star descending in the gleam          Of the cold morrow, from the emptied sky.          The hour, the distance from her old self, all          The novelty and lonesomeness of the place,          Had left a lovely awe on that fair face,          And all the land grew strange and magical.</p>
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As droops some billowing cloud to  
the crouched hill,

Heavy with all heaven's tears, for  
all earth's care,

She drooped unto me, without force  
or will,

And sank upon my bosom, mur-  
muring there,

A woman's inarticulate, passionate  
words. [earth!

O moment of all moments upon  
O life's supreme! How worth,  
how wildly worth,

Whole worlds of flame, to know  
this world affords

What even Eternity cannot restore!

When all the ends of life take  
hands, and meet

Round centres of sweet fire. Ah,  
never more,

Ah never, shall the bitter with the  
sweet

Be mingled so in the pale after-  
years!

One hour of life immortal spirits  
possess.

This drains the world, and leaves  
but weariness,

And parching passion, and perplex-  
ing tears.

Sad is it, that we cannot even keep

That hour to sweeten life's last  
toil: but Youth

Grasps all, and leaves us: and, when  
we would weep,

We dare not let our tears flow  
lest, in truth,

They fall upon our work which must  
be done.

And so we bind up our torn hearts  
from breaking:

Our eyes from weeping, and our  
brows from aching:

And follow the long pathway all  
alone.

O moment of sweet peril, perilous  
sweet!

When woman joins herself to  
man; and man

Assumes the full-lived woman, to  
complete

The end of life, since human life  
began!

When in the perfect bliss of union,  
Body and soul triumphal rapture  
claim,

When there's a spirit in blood, in  
spirit a flame,

And earth's lone hemispheres glow,  
fused in one!

Rare moment of rare peril! . . . The  
bard's song,

The mystic's musing fancy. Did  
there ever

Two perfect souls, in perfect forms,  
belong

Perfectly to each other? Never,  
never!

Perilous were such moments, for a  
touch

Might mar their clear perfection.  
Exquisite

Even for the peril of their frail  
delight.

Such things man feigns: such seeks:  
but finds not such.

No! for 'tis in ourselves our love  
doth grow:

And, when our love is fully risen  
within us,

Round the first object doth it over-  
flow,

Which, be it fair or foul, is sure  
to win us

Out of ourselves. We clothe with  
our own nature

The man or woman its first want  
doth find.

The leafless prop with our own  
buds we bind,

And hide in blossoms: fill the empty  
feature

With our own meanings: even prize  
defects

Which keep the mark of our own  
choice upon

The chosen: bless each fault whose  
spot protects



Our choice from possible confusion  
 With the world's other creatures:  
 we believe them  
 What most we wish, the more we  
 find they are not:  
 Our choice once made, with our  
 own choice we war not:  
 We worship them for what our-  
 selves we give them.

Doubt is this otherwise. . . . When  
 fate removes  
 The unworthy one from our re-  
 luctant arms,  
 We die with that lost love to other  
 loves,  
 And turn to its defects from other  
 charms.

And nobler forms, where moved  
 those forms, may move  
 With lingering looks: our cold  
 farewells we wave them.  
 We loved our lost loves for the  
 love we gave them,  
 And not for anything they gave our  
 love.

Old things return not as they were  
 in Time.  
 Trust nothing to the recompense  
 of Chance,  
 Which deals with novel forms.  
 This falling rhyme  
 Fails from the flowery steeps of  
 old romance,  
 Down that abyss which Memory  
 droops above,  
 And, gazing out of hopelessness  
 down there,  
 I see the shadow creep through  
 Youth's gold hair  
 And white Death watching over  
 red-lipped Love.

## PART II.

THE soul lives on. What lives on  
 with the soul?  
 Glimpses of something better  
 than her best;

Truer than her truest: motion to a  
 pole  
 Beyond the zones of this orb's  
 dimness guest:  
 And (since life dies not with the  
 first dead bliss)  
 Blind notions of some meaning  
 moved through time,  
 Some purpose in the deeps of the  
 sublime,  
 That stirs a pulse here, could we  
 find out this.

Visions and noises rouse us. I dis-  
 cern  
 Even in change some comfort, O  
 Beloved!  
 Suns rise and set; stars vanish and  
 return;  
 But never quite the same. And  
 life is moved  
 Toward new experience. Every  
 eye and morn  
 Descends and springs with in-  
 crease on the world.  
 And what is death but life in this  
 life furled?  
 The outward cracks, the inward life  
 is born.

Friends pass beyond the borders of  
 this Known,  
 And draw our thoughts up after  
 them. We say  
 "They are: but their relations now  
 are done  
 With Nature, and the plan of  
 night and day."  
 If never mortal man from this  
 world's light  
 Did pass away to that surround-  
 ing gloom,  
 'Twere well to doubt the life be-  
 yond the tomb;  
 But now is Truth's dark side re-  
 vealed to sight.

Father of spirits! Thine all secrets  
 be.  
 I bless Thee for the light Thou  
 hast revealed,

And that Thou hidest. Part of me  
 I see,  
 And part of me Thy wisdom hath  
 concealed,  
 Till the new life divulge it. Lord,  
 imbue me  
 With will to work in this diurnal  
 sphere,  
 Knowing myself my life's day-  
 laborer here,  
 Where evening brings the day's  
 work's wages to me.

I work my work. All its results  
 are Thine.

I know the loyal deed becomes a  
 fact  
 Which Thou wilt deal with: nor  
 will I repine  
 Although I miss the value of the  
 act.

Thou carest for the creatures: and  
 the end

Thou seest. The world unto Thy  
 hands I leave:  
 And to Thy hands my life. I will  
 not grieve  
 Because I know not all Thou dost  
 intend.

Something I know. Oft, shall it  
 come about

When every heart is full with  
 hope for man  
 The horizon straight is darkened,  
 and a doubt

Clouds all. The work the world  
 so well began  
 Wastes down, and by some deed of  
 shame is finished.

Ah yet, I will not be dismayed:  
 nor though

The good cause flourish fair, and  
 Freedom flow  
 All round, my watch beyond shall  
 be diminished.

What seemed the triumph of the  
 Fiend at length  
 Might be the effort of some dying  
 Devil,

Permitted to put forth his fullest  
 strength

To lose it all forever. While, the  
 evil

Whose cloven crest our pæans float  
 above

Might have been less than what  
 unnoticed lies

'Neath our rejoicings. Which of  
 us is wise?

We know not what we mourn: nor  
 why we love.

But teach me, O Omnipotent, since  
 strife,

Sorrow, and pain are but occur-  
 rences

Of that condition through which  
 flows my life,

Not part of me, the immortal,  
 whom distress

Cannot retain, to vex not thought  
 for these:

But to be patient, bear, forbear,  
 restrain,

And hold my spirit pure above  
 my pain.

No star that looks through life's  
 dark lattices,

But what gives token of a world  
 elsewhere.

I bless Thee for the loss of all  
 things here

Which proves the gain to be: the  
 hand of Care

That shades the eyes from earth,  
 and beckons near

The rest which sweetens all: the  
 shade Time throws

On Love's pale countenance, that  
 he may gaze

Across Eternity for better days  
 Unblinded; and the wisdom of all  
 woes:

I bless Thee for the life Thou  
 gavest, albeit

It hath known sorrow: for the  
 sorrow's self

I bless Thee; and the gift of wings  
 to flee it,

Led by this spirit of song, — this  
 ministering elf,  
 That to sweet uses doth unwind my  
 pain,  
 And spin his palace out of poison-  
 flowers.  
 To float, an impulse, through the  
 livelong hours,  
 From sky to sky, on Fancy's glit-  
 tering skein.  
 Aid me, sweet Spirit, escaping from  
 the throng  
 Of those that raise the Corybantic  
 shout,  
 And barbarous, dissonant cymbal's  
 clash prolong,  
 In fear lest any hear the God cry  
 out,  
 Now that the night resumes her  
 bleak retreat  
 In these dear lands, footing the  
 unwandered waste  
 Of Loss, to walk in Italy, and  
 taste  
 A little while of what was once so  
 sweet.

## PART III.

NURSE of an ailing world, beloved  
 Night!  
 Our days are fretful children,  
 weak to bear  
 A little pain : they wrangle, wound,  
 and fight  
 Each other, weep, and sicken,  
 and despair.  
 Thou, with thy motherly hand that  
 healeth care,  
 Stillest our little noise : rebukest  
 one,  
 Soothe another : blamest tasks  
 undone :  
 Refreshest jaded hope ; and teachest  
 prayer.  
 Thine is the mother's sweet hush-  
 hush, that stills  
 The flutterings of a plaintive  
 heart to rest.

Thine is the mother's medicining  
 hand that fills  
 Sleep's opiate : thine the mother's  
 patient breast :  
 Thine, too, the mother's mute re-  
 proachful eyes,  
 That gently look our angry noise  
 to shame  
 When all is done : we dare not  
 meet their blame :  
 They are so silent, and they are so  
 wise.  
 Thou that from this lone casement,  
 while I write,  
 Seen in the shadowy upspring,  
 swift dost post  
 Without a sound the polar star to  
 light,  
 Not idly did the Chaldee shep-  
 herds boast  
 By thy stern lights man's life aright  
 to read.  
 All day he hides himself from his  
 own heart,  
 Swaggers and struts, and plays  
 his foolish part :  
 Thou only seest him as he is indeed.  
 For who could feign false worth, or  
 give the nod  
 Among his fellows, or this dust  
 disown,  
 With naught between him and those  
 lights of God,  
 Left awfully alone with the Alone?  
 Who vaunt high words, whose least  
 heart's beating jars  
 The hush of sentinel worlds that  
 take mute note  
 Of all beneath yon judgment  
 plains remote?—  
 A universal cognizance of stars !  
 And yet, O gentlest angel of the  
 Lord!  
 Thou leadest by the hand the  
 artisan  
 Away from work. Thou bringest,  
 on ship-board,  
 When gleam the dead-lights, to  
 the lonely man

That turns the wheel, a blessed  
memory  
Of apple-blossoms, and the moun-  
tain vales  
About his little cottage in Green  
Wales,  
Miles o'er the ridges of the rolling  
sea.

Thou bearest divine forgiveness  
amongst men.

Relenting Anger pauses by the bed  
Where Sleep looks so like Death.  
The absent then

Return; and Memory beckons  
back the dead,  
Thou helpest home (thy balmy hand  
it is!)

The hard-worked husband to the  
pale-cheeked wife,  
And hushes up the poor day's  
household strife  
On marriage pillows, with a good-  
night kiss.

Thou bringest to the wretched and  
forlorn

Woman, that down the glimmer-  
ing by-street hovers,  
A dream of better days: the gleam  
of corn

About her father's field, and her  
first lover's  
Grave, long forgotten in the green  
churchyard:

Voices, long-stilled, from purer  
hours, before  
The rushlight, Hope, went out;  
and, through the door  
Of the lone garret, when the nights  
were hard,

Hunger, the wolf, pnt in his paw,  
and found her

Sewing the winding-sheet of  
Youth, alone;  
And griped away the last cold com-  
forts round her:—

Her little bed; the mean clothes  
she had on:

Her mother's picture— the sole  
saint she knew;

Till nothing else was left for the  
last crust  
But the poor body, and the heart's  
young trust  
In its own courage: and so these  
went too.

Home from the heated Ball flusht  
Beauty stands,  
Musing beside her costly couch  
alone:

But while she loosens, faint, with  
jewelled hands,  
The diamonds from her dark hair,  
one by one,

Thou whisperest in her empty heart  
the name  
Of one that died heart-broken for  
her sake

Long since, and all at once the  
coiled hell-snake  
Turns stinging in his egg, — and  
pomp is shame.

Thou comest to the man of many  
pleasures  
Without a joy, that, soulless, plays  
for souls,

Whose life's a squandered heap of  
plundered treasures,  
While, listless loitering by, the  
moment rolls

From nothing on to nothing. From  
the shelf  
Perchance he takes a cynic book.  
Perchance

A dead flower stains the leaves.  
The old romance  
Returns. Ere morn, perchance, he  
shoots himself.

Thou comest, with a touch of scorn,  
to me,  
That o'er the broken wine-cup of  
my youth

Sit brooding here, and pointest  
silently  
To thine unchanging stars. Yes!  
yes! in truth,

They seem more reachless now  
than when of yore

Above the promist land I watcht  
 them shine,  
 And all among their cryptic ser-  
 pentine  
 Went climbing Hope, new planets  
 to explore.  
 Not for the flesh that fades — al-  
 though decay  
 This thronged metropolis of sense  
 o'erspread:  
 Not for the joys of youth, that fleet  
 away  
 When the wise swallows to the  
 south are fled;  
 Not that, beneath the law which  
 fades the flower,  
 An earthly hope should wither in  
 the cells  
 Of this poor earthly house of life,  
 where dwells  
 Unseen the solitary Thinking-  
 Power;  
 But that where fades the flower the  
 weed should flourish;  
 For all the baffled efforts to achieve  
 The imperishable from the things  
 that perish,  
 For broken vows, and weakened  
 will, I grieve.  
 Knowing that night of all is creep-  
 ing on  
 Wherein can no man work, I  
 sorrow most  
 For what is gained, and not for  
 what is lost;  
 Nor mourn alone what's undone,  
 but what's done.  
 What light, from yonder windless  
 cloud released,  
 Is widening up the peaks of yon  
 black hills?  
 It is the full moon in the mystic  
 east,  
 Whose coming half the unravisht  
 darkness fills  
 Till all among the ribbed light  
 cloudlets pale,  
 From shore to shore in sapphirine  
 deeps divine,  
 The orbéd splendor seems to slide  
 and shine  
 Aslope the rolling vapors in the vale.  
 Abroad the stars' majestic light is  
 flung,  
 And they fade brightening up the  
 steps of Night.  
 Cold mysteries of the midnight!  
 that, among  
 The sleeps and pauses of this  
 world, in sight,  
 Reveal a doubtful hope to wild De-  
 sire;  
 Which, hungering for the sources  
 of the suns,  
 Makes moan beyond the blue Sep-  
 tentrions,  
 And spidery Saturn in his webs of  
 fire;  
 Whether the unconscious destinie  
 of man  
 Move with the motions of your  
 spheréd lights,  
 And his brief course, foredoomed  
 ere he began,  
 Your shining symbols fixed in  
 reachless heights,  
 Or whether all the purpose of hi  
 pain  
 Be shut in his wild heart and  
 feverish will,  
 He knows no more than this: —  
 that you are still,  
 But he is moved: he goes, but you  
 remain.  
 Fooled was the human vanity that  
 wrote  
 Strange names in astral fire on  
 yonder pole.  
 Who and what were they — in what  
 age remote —  
 That scrawled weak boasts on  
 yon sidereal scroll?  
 Orion shines. Now seek for Nim-  
 rod. Where?  
 Osiris is a fable, and no more:  
 But Sirius burns as brightly as of  
 yore.  
 There is no shade on Berenice's hair

You that outlast the Pyramids, as they

Outlast their founders, tell us of our doom!

You that see love depart, and Error stray,

And Genius toiling at a splendid tomb,

Like those Egyptian slaves: and Hope deceived:

And strength still failing when the goal is near:

And Passion parcht: and Rapture claspt to Fear:

And Trust betrayed. and Memory bereaved!

Vain question! Shall some other voice declare

What my soul knows not of herself? Ah no!

Dumb patient Monster, grieving everywhere,

Thou answerest nothing which I did not know.

The broken fragments of ourselves we seek

In alien forms, and leave our lives behind.

In our own memories our graves we find.

And when we lean upon our hearts, they break.

I seem to see 'mid yonder glimmering spheres

Another world:—not that our prayers record,

Wherein our God shall wipe away all tears,

And never voice of mourning shall be heard;

But one between the sunset and moonrise:

Near night, yet neighboring day: a twilit land,

And peopled by a melancholy band—

The souls that loved and failed— with hopeless eyes;

More like that Hades of the antique creeds;—

A land of vales forlorn, where Thought shall roam

Regretful, void of wholesome human deeds, [home,

An endless, homeless pining after To which all sights and sounds shall minister

In vain:—white roses glimmering all alone

In an evening light, and, with his haunting tone,

The advancing twilight's shard-born trumpeter.

A world like this world's worst come back again;

Still groaning 'neath the burthen of a Fall:

Eternal longing with eternal pain, Want without hope, and memory saddening all.

All congregated failure and despair Shall wander there, through some old maze of wrong:—

Ophelia drowning in her own death-song,

And First-Love strangled in his golden hair.

Ah well, for those that overcome, no doubt

The crowns are ready; strength is to the strong.

But we — but we — weak hearts that grope about

In darkness, with a lamp that fails along

The lengthening midnight, dying ere we reach

The bridal doors! O, what for us remains,

But mortal effort with immortal pains?

And yet — God breathed a spirit into each!

I know this miracle of the soul is more

Than all the marvels that it looks upon.

And we are kings whose heritage  
was before

The spheres, and owes no homage  
to the sun.

In my own breast a mightier world  
I bear

Than all those orbs on orbs about  
me rolled;

Nor are you kinglier, stars, though  
throned on gold,

And given the empires of the mid-  
night-air.

For I, too, am undying as you are.

O teach me calm, and teach me  
self-control:—

To sphere my spirit like yon fixed  
star

That moves not ever in the utmost  
pole,

But whirls, and sleeps, and turns all  
heaven one way.

So, strong as Atlas, should the  
spirit stand,

And turn the great globe round in  
her right hand,

For recreation of hersovereigns way.

Ah yet!—For all, I shall not use my  
power,

Nor reign within the light of my  
own home,

Till speculation fades, and that  
strange hour

Of the departing of the soul is  
come;

Till all this wrinkled husk of care  
falls by,

And my immortal nature stands  
upright

In her perpetual morning, and the  
light

Of suns that set not on Eternity!



## BOOK I.—IN ITALY.

### THE MAGIC LAND.

By woodland belt, by ocean bar,  
The full south breeze our fore-  
heads fanned,

And, under many a yellow star,  
We dropped into the Magic Land.

There, every sound and every sight  
Means more than sight or sound  
elsewhere;

Each twilight star a twofold light;  
Each rose a double redness, there.

By ocean bar, by woodland belt,  
Our silent course a syren led,  
Till dark in dawn began to melt,  
Through the wild wizard-work  
o'erhead.

A murmur from the violet vales!  
A goblin in the goblin dell!

There Beauty all her breast unveils,  
And Music pours out all her shell.

We watched, toward the land of  
dreams,

The fair moon draw the murmur-  
ing main;

A single thread of silver beams  
Was made the monster's rippling  
chair.

We heard far off the syren's song;  
We caught the gleam of sea-  
maid's hair. [among,

The glimmering isles and rocks  
We moved through sparkling  
purple air.

Then Morning rose, and smote from  
far,

Her elfin harps o'er land and sea;  
And woodland belt, and ocean bar,  
To one sweet note, sighed "Italy!"

## DESIRE.

THE golden Planet of the Occident  
Warm from his bath comes up,  
i' the rosy air,  
And you may tell which way the  
Daylight went,  
Only by his last footsteps shining  
there :

For now he dwells  
Sea-deep o'er the other shore of  
the world,  
And winds himself in the pink-  
mouthéd shells ;  
Or, with his dusky, sun-dyed Priest,  
Walks in the gardens of the gor-  
geous East ;  
Or hides in Indian hills ; or sail-  
eth where  
Floats, curiously curled,  
Leagues out of sight and scent of  
spicy trees,  
The cream-white nautilus on sap-  
phrine seas.

But here the Night from the hill-  
top yonder,  
Steals all alone, nor yet too soon ;  
I have sighed for, and sought for,  
her ; sadder and fonder  
(All through the lonely and ling-  
ering noon)  
Than a maiden that sits by the lat-  
tice to ponder

On vows made in vain, long since,  
under the moon.  
Her dusky hair she hath shaken free,  
And her tender eyes are wild with  
love ;  
And her balmy bosom lies bare to me.  
She hath lighted the seven sweet  
Pleiads above,  
She is breathing over the dreaming  
sea,  
She is murmuring low in the cedar  
grove ;  
She hath put to sleep the moaning  
dove

In the silent cypress-tree.  
And there is no voice nor whisper, —  
No voice nor whisper,

In the hillside olives all at rest,  
Underneath blue-lighted Hesper,  
Sinking, slowly, in the liquid west :  
For the night's heart knoweth best  
Love by silence most express.  
The nightingales keep mute  
Each one his fairy flute,  
Where the mute stars look down,  
And the laurels close the green sea-  
side :

Only one amorous lute  
Twangs in the distant town,  
From some lattice opened wide :  
The climbing rose and vine are  
here, are there.

On the terrace, around, above me :  
The lone Ledæan \* lights from ycn  
enchanted air  
Look down upon my spirit, like a  
spirit's eyes that love me.

How beautiful, at night, to muse on  
the mountain height,  
Moated in purple air, and all  
alone !

How beautiful, at night, to look  
into the light  
Of loving eyes, when loving lips  
lean down unto our own !  
But there is no hand in mine, no  
hand in mine,

Nor any tender cheek against me  
prest :  
O stars that o'er me shine, I pine, I  
pine, I pine,  
With hopeless fancies hidden in  
an ever-hungering breast !

O where, O where is she that should  
be here,  
The spirit my spirit dreameth?  
With the passionate eyes, so deep  
so dear,  
Where a secret sweetness beam-  
eth?  
O sleepeth she, with her soft gold  
hair

\* "How oft, unwearied, have we spent the  
nights,  
Till the Ledæan stars, so famed for love,  
Wondered at us from above." — COWLEY



Streaming over the fragrant pillow,  
 And a rich dream glowing in her  
 ripe cheek,  
 Far away, I know not where,  
 By lonely shores, where the tumbling  
 billow  
 Sounds all night in an emerald  
 creek?

Or doth she lean o'er the casement  
 stone

When the day's dull noise is done  
 with,  
 And the sceptred spirit remounts  
 alone

Into her long-usurpéd throne,  
 By the stairs the stars are won with?  
 Hearing the white owl call

Where the river draws through the  
 meadows below,

By the beeches brown, and the  
 broken wall,

His silvery, seaward waters, slow  
 To the ocean bounding all:

With, here a star on his glowing  
 breast,

And, there a lamp down-stream-  
 ing,

And a musical motion towards the  
 west

Where the long white cliffs are  
 gleaming;

While, far in the moonlight, lies at  
 rest

A great ship, asleep and dream-  
 ing?

Or doth she linger yet  
 Among her sisters and brothers,

In the chamber where happy faces  
 are met,

Distinct from all the others?  
 As my star up there, be it never so  
 bright,

No other star resembles.

Doth she steal to the window, and  
 strain her sight

(While the pearl in her warm hair  
 trembles)

Over the dark, the distant night,

Feeling something changed in her  
 home yet;

That old songs have lost their old  
 delight,

And the true soul is not come yet?

Till the nearest star in sight  
 Is drowned in a tearful light.

I would that I were nigh her,  
 Wherever she rest or rove!

My spirit waves as a spiral fire  
 In a viewless wind doth move.

Go forth, alone, go forth, wild-  
 winged Desire,

Thou art the bird of Jove,  
 That broodest lone by the Olympian  
 throne;

And strong to bear the thunders  
 which destroy,

Or fetch the ravisht, flute-playing  
 Phrygian boy;

Go forth, across the world, and  
 find my love!

#### FATALITY.

I HAVE seen her, with her golden  
 hair,

And her exquisite primrose face,  
 And the violet in her eyes;

And my heart received its own de-  
 spair —

The thrall of a hopeless grace,  
 And the knowledge of how  
 youth dies.

Live hair afloat with snakes of gold,  
 And a throat as white as snow,

And a stately figure and foot;  
 And that faint pink smile, so sweet,  
 so cold,

Like a wood anemone, closed be-  
 low

The shade of an ilex root.

And her delicate milk-white hand  
 in mine,

And her pensive voice in my ear,  
 And her eyes downeast as we  
 speak.

I am filled with a rapture, vague  
 and fine;

For there has fallen a sparkling  
tear  
Over her soft, pale cheek.  
And I know that all is hopeless now.  
And that which might have been,  
Had she only waited a year or  
two,  
Is turned to a wild regret, I know,  
Which will haunt us both, what-  
ever the scene,  
And whatever the path we go.  
Meanwhile, for one moment, hand  
in hand,  
We gaze on each other's eyes;  
And the red moon rises above  
us;  
We linger with love in the lovely  
laud, —  
Italy with its yearning skies,  
And its wild white stars that  
love us.

## A VISION.

THE hour of Hesperus! the hour  
when feeling  
Grows likest memory, and the full  
heart swells  
With pensive pleasure to the mellow  
pealing  
Of mournful music upon distant  
bells:  
The hour when it seems sweetest to  
be loved,  
And saddest to have loved in  
days no more.  
O love, O life, O lovely land of  
yore,  
Through which, erewhile, these  
weary footsteps roved,  
Was it a vision? Or Irene, sitting,  
Lone in her chamber, on her snowy  
bed,  
With listless fingers, lingeringly  
unknitting  
Her silken bodice; and, with  
bended head,  
Hiding in warm hair, half way to her  
knee,

Her pearl-pale shoulder, leaning  
ou one arm,  
Athwart the darkness, odorous  
and warm,  
To watch the low, full moon set,  
pensively?  
A fragrant lamp burned dimly in  
the room,  
With scarce a gleam in either look-  
ing-glass.  
The mellow moonlight, through the  
deep-blue gloom,  
Did all along the dreamy chamber  
pass, [awe  
As though it were a little toucht with  
(Being new-come into that quiet  
place  
In such a quiet way) at the strange  
grace  
Of that pale lady, and what else it  
saw; —  
Rare flowers: narcissi; irises, each  
crowned;  
Red oleander blossoms; hyaciuths  
Flooding faint fragrance, richly  
curled all round,  
Corinthian, cool columnar flowers  
on plinths;  
Waxen camelias, white and crimson  
ones; [rose,  
And amber lilies, and the regal  
Which for the breast of queens  
full-scornful grows;  
All pinnaled in urns of carven  
bronze:  
Tables of inwrought stone, true  
Florentine, —  
Olympian circles thronged with  
Mercuries,  
Minervas, little Junos dug i' the  
green  
Of ruined Rome; and Juno's own  
rich eyes  
Vivid on peacock plumes Sidonian:  
A ribboned lute, young Music's  
cradle: books,  
Vellumed and claspt: and with  
bewildered looks,  
Madonna's picture, — the old smile  
grown wan.

From bloomed thickets, firefly-lamped, beneath  
 The terrace, fluted cool the nightingale.  
 In at the open window came the breath  
 Of many a balmy, dim blue, dreaming vale.  
 At intervals the howlet's note came clear,  
 Fluttering dark silence through the cypress grove;  
 An infant breeze from the elf-land of Love,  
 Lured by the dewy hour, crept, lisping, near.

And now is all the night her own, to make it  
 Or grave or gay with throngs of waking dreams.  
 Now grows her heart so ripe, a sigh might shake it  
 To showers of fruit, all golden as bessems  
 Hesperian growth. Why not, on nights like this,  
 Should Daphne out from yon green laurel slip?  
 A Dryad from the ilex, with white hip  
 Quivered and tonged to hunt with Artemis?

To-night, what wonder were it, while such shadows  
 Are taking up such shapes on moonlit mountains,  
 Such star-flies kindling o'er low emerald meadows,  
 Such voices floating out of hill-side fountains,  
 If some full face should from the window greet her,  
 Whose eyes should be new planetary lights,  
 Whose voice a well of liquid love-delights,  
 And to the distance sighingly entreat her?

## EROS.

WHAT wonder that I loved her thus,  
 that night?  
 The Immortals know each other at first sight,  
 And Love is of them.

In the fading light  
 Of that delicious eve, whose stars even yet  
 Gild the long dreamless nights, and cannot set,  
 She passed me, through the silence: all her hair,  
 Her waving, warm, bright hair neglectfully  
 Poured round her showy throat as without care  
 Of its own beauty.

And when she turned on me  
 The sorrowing light of desolate eyes divine,  
 I knew in a moment what our lives must be  
 Henceforth. It lightened on me then and there,  
 How she was irretrievably all mine,  
 I hers,— through time, become eternity. [wise,  
 It could not ever have been other-  
 Gazing into those eyes.

And if, before I gazed on them, my soul, [lowed,  
 Oblivious of her destiny, had followed  
 In days forever silent, the control  
 Of any beauty less divinely hal-  
 lowed [brows,  
 Than that upon her beautiful white  
 (The serene summits of all earthly sweetness!)

Straightway the records of all other  
 vows  
 Of idol-worship faded silently  
 Out of the folding leaves of memory,  
 Forever and forever; and my heart became  
 Pure white at once, to keep in its completeness,  
 And perfect purity,  
 Her mystic name.

## INDIAN LOVE-SONG.

My body sleeps: my heart awakes.

My lips to breathe thy name are  
moved

In slumber's car: then slumber  
breaks;

And I am drawn to thee, beloved.

Thou drawest me, thou drawest me,

Through sleep, through night, I  
hear the rills,

And hear the leopard in the hills,  
And down the dark I feel to thee.

The vineyards and the villages

Were silent in the vales, the rocks.

I followed past the myrrhy trees,

And by the footsteps of the flocks.

Wild honey, dropt from stone to  
stone,

Where bees have been, my path  
suggests.

The winds are in the eagles' nests.

The moon is hid. I walk alone.

Thou drawest me, thou drawest me

Across the glimmering wilder-  
nesses,

And drawest me, my love, to thee,

With dove's eyes hidden in thy  
tresses.

The world is many: my love is one.

I find no likeness for my love.

The cinnamons grow in the grove:

The Golden Tree grows all alone.

O who hath seen her wondrous  
hair!

Or seen my dove's eyes in the  
woods?

Or found her voice upon the air?

Her steps along the solitudes?

Oh where is beauty like to hers?

She draweth me, she draweth me.

I sought her by the incense-tree,  
And in the aloes, and in the firs.

Where art thou, O my heart's de-  
light,

With dove's eyes hidden in thy  
locks?

My hair is wet with dews of night.

My feet are torn upon the rocks.

The cedarn scents, the spices, fall  
About me. Strange and stranger  
seems

The path. There comes a sound  
of streams

Above the darkness on the vale.

No trees drop gums; but poison  
flowers

From rifts and clefts all round me  
fall;

The perfumes of thy midnight  
bowers,

The fragrance of thy chambers, all  
Is drawing me, is drawing me.

Thy baths prepare; anoint thine  
hair:

Open the window: meet me there:  
I come to thee, to thee, to thee!

Thy lattices are dark, my own.

Thy doors are still. My love,  
look out.

Arise, my dove with tender tone.

The camphor-clusters all about  
Are whitening. Dawn breaks  
silently.

And all my spirit with the dawn  
Expands; and, slowly, slowly  
drawn,

Through mist and darkness moves  
toward thee.

## MORNING AND MEETING.

ONE yellow star, the largest and  
the last

Of all the lovely night, was fading  
slow

(As fades a happy moment in the  
past)

Out of the changing east, when,  
yet aglow

With dreams her looks made magi-  
cal, from sleep

I waked; and oped the lattice.  
Like a rose

All the red-opening morning 'gan  
disclose

A ripened light upon the distant  
steep.

A bell was chiming through the  
crystal air  
From the high convent-church  
upon the hill.

The folk were loitering by to matin  
prayer.

The church-bell called me out,  
and seemed to fill

The air with little hopes. I reached  
the door [rise,

Before the chanted hymn began to  
And float its liquid Latin melodies  
O'er pious groups about the marble  
floor.

Breathless, I slid among the kneeling  
folk,

A little bell went tinkling through  
the pause

Of inward prayer. Then forth the  
low chant broke

Among the glooming aisles, that  
through a gauze  
Of sunlight glimmered.

Thickly throbbéd my blood.

I saw, dark-tresséd in the rose-lit  
shade,

Many a little dusk Italian maid,  
Kneeling with fervent face close  
where I stood.

The morning, all a misty splendor,  
shook

Deep in the mighty window's  
flame-lit webs.

It touched the crowned Apostle  
with his hook,

And brightened where the sea of  
jasper ebbs

Above those Saints' white feet that  
stand serene

Each with his legend, each in his  
own hue

Attired: some beryl-golden: sap-  
phire blue

Some: and some ruby-red: some  
emerald-green.

Wherefore, in rainbow-wreaths,  
the rich light rolled

About the snowy altar, sparkling  
clean.

The organ groaned and pined, then,  
growing bold,  
Revelled the cherubs' golden  
wings atween.

And in the light, beneath the music,  
kneeled

(As pale as some stone Virginia  
bending solemn

Out of the red gleam of a granite  
column)

Irene with claspt hands and cold  
lips sealed.

As one who, pausing on some  
mountain-height,

Above the breeze that breaks o'er  
vineyard walls,

Leans to the impulse of a wild de-  
light,

Bows earthward, feels the hills  
bow too, and falls —

I dropt beside her. Feeling seemed  
to expand

And close: a mist of music filled  
the air:

And, when it ceased in heaven, I  
was aware

That, through a rapture, I had  
toucht her hand.

#### THE CLOUD.

WITH shape to shape, all day,  
And change to change, by foreland,  
firth, and bay,

The cloud comes down from wan-  
dering with the wind,

Through gloom and gleam across  
the green waste seas;

And, leaving the white cliff and lone  
tower bare

To empty air,  
Slips down the windless west  
and grows defined

In splendor by degrees.

And, blown by every wind  
Of wonder through all regions of  
the mind,

From hope to fear, from doubt to  
sweet despite

Changing all shapes, and mingling  
 snow with fire,  
 The thought of her decends, sleeps  
 o'er the bounds  
 Of passion, grows, and rounds  
 Its golden outlines in a gradual  
 light  
 Of still desire.

#### ROOT AND LEAF.

THE love that deep within me lies  
 Unmoved abides in conscious  
 power;  
 Yet in the heaven of thy sweet eyes  
 it varies every hour.

A look from thee will flush the  
 cheek :

A word of thine awaken tears :  
 And ah, in all I do and speak  
 How frail my love appears !

In yonder tree, Beloved, whose  
 boughs  
 Are household both to earth and  
 heaven,  
 Whose leaves have murmured of  
 our vows  
 To many a balmy even,

The branch that wears the liveliest  
 green,  
 Is shaken by the restless bird ;  
 The leaves that nighest heaven are  
 seen,  
 By every breeze are stirred :

But storms may rise, and thunders  
 roll,  
 Nor move the giant roots below ;  
 So, from the bases of the soul,  
 My love for thee doth grow.

It seeks the heaven, and trembles  
 there  
 To every light and passing breath ;  
 But from the heart no storm can tear  
 Its rooted growth beneath.

#### WARNINGS.

BEWARE, beware of witchery !  
 And fall not in the snare  
 That lurks and lies in wanton eyes,  
 Or hides in golden hair :  
 For the Witch hath sworn to catch  
 thee,  
 And her spells are on the air.  
 "Thou art fair, fair, fatal fair,  
 O Irene !"

What is it, what is it,  
 In the whispers of the leaves ?  
 In the night-wind, when its bosom,  
 With the shower in it, grieves ?  
 In the breaking of the breaker,  
 As it breaks upon the beach  
 Through the silence of the night ?  
 Cordelia ! Cordelia !  
 A warning in my ear —  
 "Not here ! not here ! not here !  
 But seek her yet, and seek her,  
 See her ever out of reach,  
 Out of reach, and out of sight !"  
 Cordelia !

Eyes on mine, when none can view  
 me !  
 And a magic murmur through me !  
 And a presence out of Fairyland,  
 Invisible, yet near !  
 Cordelia !

"In a time which hath not been :  
 In a land thou hast not seen :  
 Thou shalt find her, but not now :  
 Thou shalt meet her, but not  
 here :"

Cordelia ! Cordelia !  
 "In the falling of the snow :  
 In the fading of the year :  
 When the light of hope is low,  
 And the last red leaf is sere."  
 Cordelia !

And my senses lie asleep, fast asleep,  
 O Irene !  
 In the chambers of this Sorceress,  
 the South,  
 In a slumber dim and deep,  
 She is seeking yet to keep,  
 Brimful of poisoned perfumes,  
 The shut blossom of my youth  
 O fatal, fatal fair Irene !

But the whispering of the leaves,  
 And the night-wind, when it grieves,  
 And the breaking of the breaker,  
 As it breaks upon the beach  
 Through the silence of the  
 night,

Cordelia!

Whisper ever in my ear  
 "Not here! not here! not  
 here!

But awake, O wanderer! seek  
 her,

Ever seek her out of reach,  
 Out of reach, and out of sight!"

Cordelia!

There is a star above me  
 Unlike all the millions round it.  
 There is a heart to love me,  
 Although not yet I have found it.  
 And awhile,

O Cordelia, Cordelia!

A light and careless singer,  
 In the subtle South I linger,  
 While the blue is on the mountain,  
 And the bloom is on the peach,  
 And the fire-fly on the night,  
 Cordelia!

But my course is ever nor-  
 ward,  
 And a whisper whispers "For-  
 ward!"

Arise, O wanderer, seek her,  
 Seek her ever out of reach,  
 Out of reach and out of sight!  
 Cordelia!

Out of sight,  
 Cordelia! Cordelia!  
 Out of reach, out of sight,  
 Cordelia!

#### A FANCY.

How sweet were life, — *this* life, if  
 we  
 (My love and I) might dwell to-  
 gether  
 Here beyond the summer sea,  
 In the heart of summer weather!

With pomegranates on the bough,  
 And with lilies in the bower;  
 And a sight of distant snow,  
 Rosy in the sunset hour.

And a little house, — no more  
 In state than suits two quiet  
 lovers;

And a woodbine round the door,  
 Where the swallow builds and  
 hovers;

With a silver sickle-moon,  
 O'er hot gardens, red with roses:  
 And a window wide, in June,  
 For serenades when evening  
 closes:

In a chamber cool and simple,  
 Trellised light from roof to base-  
 ment;

And a summer wind to dimple  
 The white curtain at the case-  
 ment:

Where, if we at midnight wake,  
 A green acacia-tree shall quiver  
 In the moonlight, o'er some lake  
 Where nightingales sing songs  
 forever.

With a pine-wood dark in sight;  
 And a bean-field climbing to us,  
 To make odors faint at night  
 Where we roam with none to view  
 us.

And a convent on the hill,  
 Through its light green olives  
 peeping

In clear sunlight, and so still,  
 All the nuns, you'd say, were  
 sleeping.

Seas at distance, seen beneath  
 Grated garden-wildernesses; —  
 Not so far but what their breath  
 At eve may fan my darling's  
 tresses.

A piano, soft in sound,  
 To make music when speech  
 wanders,

Poets reverently bound,  
 O'er whose pages rapture ponders

Canvas, brushes, hues, to catch  
 Fleeting forms in vale or moun-  
 tain :

And an evening star to watch  
 When all's still, save one sweet  
 fountain.

Ah! I idle time away  
 With impossible fond fancies!  
 For a lover lives all day  
 In a land of lone romances.

But the hot light o'er the city  
 Drops, —and see! on fire departs.  
 And the night comes down in pity  
 To the longing of our hearts.

Bind thy golden hair from falling,  
 O my love, my one, my own!  
 'Tis for thee the cuckoo's calling  
 With a note of tenderer tone.

Up the hillside, near and nearer,  
 Through the vine, the corn, the  
 flowers,  
 Till the very air grows dearer,  
 Neighboring our pleasant bowers.

Now I pass the last Poderè :  
 There, the city lies behind me.  
 See her fluttering like a fairy  
 O'er the happy grass to find me!

#### ONCE.

A FALLING star that shot across  
 The intricate and twinkling dark  
 Vanisht, yet left no sense of loss  
 Throughout the wide ethereal arc

Of those serene and solemn skies  
 That round the dusky prospect  
 rose,  
 And ever seemed to rise, and rise,  
 Through regions of unreachèd  
 repose.

Far, on the windless mountain-  
 range,  
 One crimson sparklet died: the  
 blue  
 Flushed with a brilliance, faint and  
 strange,  
 The ghost of daylight, dying too.

But half-revealed, each terrace urn  
 Glimmered, where now, in filmy  
 flight,

We watched return, and still return,  
 The blind bats searching air for  
 sight.

With sullen fits of fleeting sound,  
 Borne half asleep on slumbrous  
 air,  
 The drowsy beetle hummed around,  
 And passed, and oft repassed us,  
 there;

Where, hand in hand, our looks  
 alight  
 With thoughts our pale lips left  
 untold,

We sat, in that delicious night,  
 On that dim terrace, green and  
 old.

Deep down, far off, the city lay,  
 When forth from all its spires  
 was swept

A music o'er our souls; and they  
 To music's midmost meanings  
 leapt;

And, crushing some delirious cry  
 Against each other's lips, we clung  
 Together silent, while the sky  
 Throbbing with sound around us  
 hung;

For, borne from bells on music soft,  
 That solemn hour went forth  
 through heaven,

To stir the starry airs aloft,  
 And thrill the purple pulse of  
 even.

O happy hush of heart to heart!  
 O moment molten through with  
 bliss!

O Love, delaying long to part  
 That first, fast, individual kiss!

Whereon two lives on glowing lips  
 Hung claspt, each feeling fold in  
 fold,

Like daisies closed with crimson  
 tips,  
 That sleep about a heart of gold.



Was it some drowsy rose that moved?  
 Some dreaming dove's pathetic moan?  
 Or was it my name from lips beloved?  
 And was it thy sweet breath, mine own,  
 That made me feel the tides of sense  
 O'er life's low levels rise with might,  
 And pour my being down the immense  
 Shore of some mystic Infinite?

"O, have I found thee, my soul's soul!  
 My chosen forth from time and space!  
 And did we then break earth's control?  
 And have I seen thee face to face?

"Close, closer to thy home, my breast,  
 Closer thy darling arms enfold!  
 I need such warmth, for else the rest  
 Of life will freeze me dead with cold.

"Long was the search, the effort long,  
 Ere I compelled thee from thy sphere,  
 I know not with what mystic song,  
 I know not with what nightly tear:

"But thou art here, beneath whose eyes  
 My passion falters, even as some  
 Pale wizard's taper sinks, and dies,  
 When to his spell a spirit is come.

My brow is pale with much of pain:  
 Though I am young, my youth is gone,  
 And, shouldst thou leave me lone again,  
 I think I could not live alone.

"As some idea, half divined,  
 With tumult works within the brain  
 Of desolate genius, and the mind  
 Is vassal to imperious pain,

"For toil by day, for tears by night,  
 Till, in the sphere of vision brought,  
 Rises the beautiful and bright  
 Predestined, but relentless Thought;

"So, gathering up the dreams of years,  
 Thy love doth to its destined seat  
 Rise sovran, through the light of tears—  
 Achieved, accomplisht, and complete!

"I fear not now lest any hour  
 Should chill the lips my own have prest;  
 For I possess thee by the power  
 Whereby I am myself possest.

"These eyes must lose their guiding light:  
 These lips from thine, I know, must sever;  
 O looks and lips may disunite,  
 But ever love is love forever!"

## SINCE.

WORDS like to these were said, or dreamed  
 (How long since!) on a night divine,  
 By lips from which such rapture streamed  
 I cannot deem those lips were mine.

The day comes up above the roofs,  
 All sallow from a night of rain;  
 The sound of feet, and wheels and hoofs  
 In the blurred street begins again:

<p>The same old toil — no end — no aim!          The same vile babble in my ears;          The same unmeaning smiles: the same          Most miserable dearth of tears.</p> <p>The same dull sound: the same dull lack          Of lustre in the level gray:          It seems like Yesterday come back          With his old things, and not To-day.</p> <p>But now and then her name will fall          From careless lips with little praise,          On this dry shell, and shatter all          The smooth indifference of my days.</p> <p>They chatter of her — deem her light —          The apes and liars! they who know          As well to sound the unfathomed Night          As her impenetrable woe!</p> <p>And here, where Slander's scorn is spilt,          And gabbling Folly clucks above          Her addled eggs, it feels like guilt,          To know that far away, my love</p> <p>Her heart on every heartless hour          Is bruising, breaking, for mysake:          While, coiled and numbed, and void          of power,          My life sleeps like a winter snake.</p> <p>I know that at the mid of night,          (When she flings by the glittering stress          Of Pride, that mocks the vulgarsight,          And fronts her chamber's loneliness,)</p> <p>She breaks in tears, and, overthrown          With sorrowing, weeps the night away,          Till back to his unlovely throne          Returns the unrelenting day.</p>	<p>All treachery could devise hath wrought          Against us: — letters robbed and read:          Snares hid in smiles: betrayal bought:          And lies imputed to the dead.</p> <p>I will arise and go to her,          And save her in her own despite;          For in my breast begins to stir          A pulse of its old power and might.</p> <p>They cannot so have slandered me          But what, I know, if I should call          And stretch my arms to her, that she          Would rush into them, spite of all.</p> <p>In Life's great lazar-house, each breath          We breathe may bring or spread          the pest; [death          And, woman, each may catch his          From those that lean upon his breast.</p> <p>I know how tender friends of me          Have talked with broken hint, and glance:          — The choicest flowers of calumny,          That seem like weeds, to spring          from chance; —</p> <p>That small, small, imperceptible          Small talk, which cuts like powdered glass          Ground in Tophana — none can tell          Where lurks the power the poison has!</p> <p>I may be worse than they would prove,          (Who knows the worst of any man?)          But, right or wrong, be sure my love          Is not what they conceive, or can.</p> <p>Nor do I question what thou art,          Nor what thy life, in great or small,          Thou art, I know, what all my heart          Must beat or break for. That is all.</p>
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## A LOVE-LETTER.

My love, — my chosen, — but not mine! I send

My whole heart to thee in these words I write;

So let the blotted lines, my soul's sole friend,

Lie upon thine, and there be blest at night.

This flower, whose bruised purple blood will stain

The page now wet with the hot tears that fall —

(Indeed, indeed, I struggle to restrain

This weakness, but the tears come, spite of all!)

I plucked it from the branch you used to praise,

The branch that hides the wall. I tend your flowers.

I keep the paths we paced in happier days.

How long ago they seem, those pleasant hours.

The white laburnum's out. Your judas-tree

Begins to shed those crimson buds of his. [joyously.

The nightingales sing — ah, too Who says those birds are sad?

I think there is

That in the books we read, which deeper wrings

My heart, so they lie dusty on the shelf.

Ah me, I meant to speak of other things

Less sad. In vain! they bring me to myself.

I know your patience. And I would not cast

New shade on days so dark as yours are grown

By weak and wild repining for the past,

Since it is past forever, O mine own!

For hard enough the daily cross you bear,

Without that deeper pain reflection brings;

And all too sore the fretful household care,

Free of the contrast of remembered things.

But ah! it little profits, that we thrust

For all that's said, what both must feel, unnamed.

Better to face it boldly, as we must,

Than feel it in the silence, and be shamed.

Irene, I have loved you, as men love

Light, music, odor, beauty, love itself! —

Whatever is apart from, and above Those daily needs which deal with

dust and pelf.

And I had been content, without one thought

Our guardian angels could have blusht to know,

So to have lived and died, demanding nought

Save, living dying, to have loved you so.

My youth was orphaned, and my age will be

Childless. I have no sister. None, to steal

One stray thought from the many thoughts of thee,

Which are the source of all I think and feel.

My wildest wish was vassal to thy will:

My haughtiest hope, a pensioner on thy smile,

Which did with light my barren being fill,

As moonlight glorifies some desert isle.

<p>I never thought to know what I have known, — The rapture, dear, of being loved by you :</p> <p>I never thought, within my heart, to own One wish so blest that you should share it too :</p> <p>Nor ever did I deem, contemplat- ing The many sorrows in this place of pain, So strange a sorrow to my life could cling, As, being thus loved, to be be- loved in vain.</p> <p>But now we know the best, the worst. We have Interred, and prematurely, and unknown, Our youth, our hearts, our hopes, in one small grave, Whence we must wander, wid- owed, to our own.</p> <p>And if we comfort not each other, what Shall comfort us, in the dark days to come?</p> <p>Not the light laughter of the world, and not The faces and the firelight of fond home.</p> <p>And so I write to you; and write, and write, For the mere sake of writing to you, dear.</p> <p>What can I tell you, that you know not? Night Is deepening through the rosy atmosphere</p> <p>About the lonely casement of this room, Which you have left familiar with the grace That grows where you have been. And on the gloom I almost fancy I can see your face.</p>	<p>Not pale with pain, and tears re- strained for me, As when I last beheld it; but as first, A dream of rapture and of poesy, Upon my youth, like dawn on dark, it burst.</p> <p>Perchance I shall not ever see again That face. I know that I shall never see Its radiant beauty as I saw it then, Save by this lonely lamp of memory, With childhood's starry graces lin- gering yet I' the rosy orient of young woman hood; And eyes like woodland violets new- ly wet; And lips that left their meaning in my blood!</p> <p>I will not say to you what I might say To one less worthily loved, less worthy love.</p> <p>I will not say . . . "Forget the past. Be gay. And let the all ill-judging world approve</p> <p>"Light in your eyes, and laughter on your lip." I will not say . . . "Dissolve in thought forever Our sorrowful, but sacred, fellow- ship." For that would be, to bid you, dear, dis sever</p> <p>Your nature from its nobler heritage In consolations registered in hea- ven, For griefs this world is barren to assuage, And hopes to which, on earth, no home is given.</p> <p>But I would whisper, what forever- more My own heart whispers through the wakeful night, . . .</p>
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“ This grief is but a shadow, flung  
before,  
From some refulgent substance  
out of sight.”

Wherefore it happens, in this rid-  
dling world,

That, where sin came not, sorrow  
yet should be;

Why heaven's most hurtful thunders  
should be hurled

At what seems noblest in human-  
ity;

And we are punished for our purest  
deeds,

And chastened for our holiest  
thoughts; . . . alas!

There is no reason found in all the  
creeds,

Why these things are, nor whence  
they come to pass.

But in the heart of man, a secret  
voice

There is, which speaks, and will  
not be restrained,

Which cries to Grief . . . “ Weep  
on, while I rejoice,

Knowing that, somewhere, all will  
be explained.”

I will not eant that commonplace of  
friends,

Which never yet hath dried one  
mourner's tears,

Nor say that grief's slow wisdom  
makes amends

For broken hearts and desolated  
years.

For who would barter all he hopes  
from life,

To be a little wiser than his kind?  
Who arm his nature for continued  
strife,

Where all he seeks for hath been  
left behind?

But I would say, O pure and perfect  
pearl

Which I have dived so deep in  
life to find,

Locked in my heart thou liest. The  
wave may curl,

The wind may wail above us.  
Wave and wind,

What are their storm and strife to  
me and you?

No strife can mar the pure heart's  
inmost calm.

This life of ours, what is it? A very  
few

Soon-ended years, and then,—the  
ceaseless psalm,

And the eternal sabbath of the  
soul!

Hush! . . . while I write, from  
the dim Carminé

The midnight angelus begins to roll,  
And float athwart the darkness up  
to me.

My messenger (a man by danger  
tried)

Waits in the courts below: and  
ere our star [died,

Upon the forehead of the dawn hath  
Belovéd one, this letter will be far

Athwart the mountain, and the mist,  
to you.

I know each robber hamlet. I  
know all

This mountain people. I have  
friends, both true

And trusted, sworn to aid what-  
e'er befall.

I have a bark upon the gulf. And I,  
If to my heart I yielded in this  
hour,

Might say . . . “ Sweet fellow-suf-  
ferer, let us fly!

I know a little isle which doth  
embower

“ A home where exiled angels might  
forbear

Awhile to mourn for paradise.” . . .  
But no!

Never, whate'er fate now may bring  
us, dear,

Shalt thou reproach me for that  
only woe

Which even love is powerless to  
console;

Which dwells where duty dies:  
and haunts the tomb

Of life's abandoned purpose in the  
soul;

And leaves to hope, in heaven it-  
self, no room.

Man cannot make, but may ennoble,  
fate,

By nobly bearing it. So let us  
trust,

Not to ourselves, but God, and  
calmly wait

Love's orient, out of darkness  
and of dust.

Farewell, and yet again farewell,  
and yet

Never farewell, — if farewell  
mean to fare

Alone and disunited. Love hath set  
Our days, in music, to the self-  
same air;

And I shall feel, wherever we may  
be,

Even though in absence and an  
alien clime,

The shadow of the sunniness of  
thee,

Hovering, in patience, through a  
clouded time.

Farewell! The dawn is rising, and  
the light

Is making, in the east, a faint en-  
deavor

To illuminate the mountain peaks.  
Good-night.

Thine own, and only thine, my  
love, forever.

#### CONDEMNED ONES.

ABOVE thy child I saw thee bend,  
Where in that silent room we sat  
apart.

I watched the involuntary tear de-  
scend;

The firelight was not all so dim, my  
friend,

But I could read thy heart.

Yet when, in that familiar room,  
I strove, so moveless in my place,  
To look with comfort in thy face,  
That child's young smile was all  
that I could see

Ever between us in the thoughtful  
gloom, —

Ever between thyself and me, —  
With its bewildering grace.

Life is not what it might have been,  
Nor are we what we would!

And we must meet with smiling  
mien,

And part in careless mood,  
Knowing that each retains unseen,

In cells of sense subdued,  
A little lurking secret of the blood —

A little serpent-secret rankling  
keen —

That makes the heart its food.

Yet is there much for grateful tears,  
if sad ones,

And Hope's young orphans Memory  
mothers yet;

So let them go, the sunny days we  
had once,

Our night hath stars that will not  
ever set.

And in our hearts are harps, albeit  
not glad ones,

Yet not all unmelodious, through  
whose strings

The night-winds murmur their fa-  
miliar things,

Unto a kindred sadness: the sea  
brings

The spirits of its solitude, with  
wings

Folden about the music of its lyre,  
Thrilled with deep duals by sublime  
desire,

Which never can attain, yet ever  
must aspire,

And glorify regret.

What might have been, I know, is  
not :

What must be, must be borne :

But, ah! what hath been will not  
be forgot,

Never, oh! never, in the years to  
follow!

Though all their summers light a  
waste forlorn,

Yet shall there be (hid from the  
careless swallow

And sheltered from the bleak wind  
in the thorn)

In Memory's mournful but beloved  
hollow,

One dear green spot!

Hope, the high will of Heaven

To help us hath not given,

But more than unto most of conso-  
lation :

Since heart from heart may borrow  
Healing for deep heart-sorrow,

And draw from yesterday, to soothe  
to-morrow,

The sad, sweet divination

Of that unuttered sympathy, which  
is

Love's sorceress, and for Love's  
dear sake,

About us both such spells doth  
make,

As none can see, and none can  
break,

And none restrain; — a secret pain  
Claspt to a secret bliss.

A tone, a touch,

A little look, may be so much!

Those moments brief, nor often,

When, leaning laden breast to  
breast,

Pale cheek to cheek, life, long re-  
rest.

May gush with tears that leave half  
blest

The want of bliss they soften.

The little glance across the crowd,  
None else can read, wherein there  
lies

▲ life of love at once avowed —

The embrace of pining eyes. . . .

So little more had made earth  
heaven,

That hope to help us was not given!

### THE STORM.

BOTH hollow and hill were dumb as  
death,

While the skies were silently  
changing form;

And the dread forecast of the  
thunder-storm

Made the crouched land hold in its  
breath.

But the monstrous vapor as yet was  
unriven

That was breeding the thunder  
and lightning and rain;

And the wind that was waiting to  
ruin the plain

Was yet fast in some far hold of  
heaven.

So, in absolute absence of stir or  
strife,

The red land lay as still as a  
drifted leaf:

The roar of the thunder had been  
a relief,

To the calm of that death-brooding  
life.

At the wide-flung casement she  
stood full height,

With her long rolling hair tum-  
bled all down her back;

And, against the black sky's su-  
pernatural black,

Her white neck gleamed scornfully  
white.

I could catch not a gleam of her  
angered eyes

(She was sullenly watching the  
slow storm roll),

But I felt they were drawing down  
into her soul

The thunder that darkened the skies.

And how could I feign, in that  
heartless gloom,  
To be carelessly reading that  
stupid page?  
What harm, if I flung it in anguish  
and rage,  
Her book, to the end of the room?

“And so, do we part thus forever?”  
. . . I said,  
“O, speak only one word, and I  
pardon the rest!”  
She drew her white scarf tighter  
over her breast,  
But she never once turned round  
her head.

“In this wicked old world is there  
nought to disdain?  
Or”—I groaned—“are those  
dark eyes such deserts of  
blindness,  
That, O Woman! your heart must  
hoard all its unkindness,  
For the man on whose breast it hath  
lain?”

“Leave it nameless, the grave of the  
grief that is past;  
Be its sole sign the silence we  
keep for its sake.  
I have loved you—lie still in my  
heart till it break:  
As I loved, I must love to the last.

“Speak! the horrible silence is  
stifling my soul.”  
She turned on me at once all the  
storm in her eyes;  
And I heard the low thunder aloof  
in the skies,  
Beginning to mutter and roll.

She turned—by the lightning re-  
vealed in its glare,  
And the tempest had clothed her  
with terror: it clung  
To the folds of her vaporous gar-  
ments, and hung  
In the heaps of her heavy wild hair.

But one word broke the silence; but  
one; and it fell  
With the weight of a mountain  
upon me. Next moment  
The fierce levin flashed in my eyes.  
From my comment  
She was gone when I turned. Who  
can tell

How I got to my home on the  
mountain? I know  
That the thunder was rolling, the  
lightning still flashing,  
The great bells were tolling, my  
very brain crashing  
In my head, a few hours ago:

Then all hushed. In the distance  
the blue rain receded;  
And the fragments of storm were  
spread out on the hills;  
Hard by, from my lattice, I heard  
the far rills  
Leaping down their rock-channels,  
wild-weeded.

The round, red moon was yet low  
in the air. . . .  
O, I knew it, foresaw it, and felt  
it, before  
I heard her light hand on the  
latch of the door!  
When it opened at last,—she was  
there.

Childlike, and wistful, and sorrow-  
ful-eyed,  
With the rain on her hair, and the  
rain on her cheek;  
She knelt down, with her fair  
forehead fallen and meek  
In the light of the moon at my side.

And she called me by every caress-  
ing old name  
She of old had invented and cho-  
sen for me:  
She crouched at my feet, with her  
check on my knee,  
Like a wild thing grown suddenly  
tame.



In the world there are women  
enough, maids or mothers;  
Yet, in multiplied millions, I never  
should find

The symbol of aught in her face,  
or her mind.

She has nothing in common with  
others.

And she loves me! This morning  
the earth, pressed beneath  
Her light foot, keeps the print.

'Twas no vision last night,  
For the lily she dropped, as she  
went, is yet white

With the dew on its delicate sheath!

### THE VAMPIRE.

I FOUND a corpse with golden hair,  
Of a maiden seven months dead.  
But the face, with the death in it,  
still was fair,

And the lips with their love were  
red.

Rose leaves on a snow-drift shed,  
Blood-drops by Adonis bled,  
Doubtless were not so red.

I combed her hair into curls of gold,  
And I kissed her lips till her lips  
were warm,

And I bathed her body in moonlight  
cold,

Till she grew to a living form :  
Till she stood up bold to a magic of  
old,

And walked to a muttered  
charm —

Life-like, without alarm.

And she walks by me and she talks  
by me,

Evermore, night and day ;

For she loves me so, that, wherever  
I go,

She follows me all the way —

This corpse — you would almost  
say

There pined a soul in the clay.

Her eyes are so bright at the dead  
of night

That they keep me awake with  
dread ;

And my life-blood fails in my veins  
and pales

At the sight of her lips so red :

For her face is as white as the pil-  
low by night

Where she kisses me on my bed :  
All her gold hair outspread —  
Neither alive nor dead.

I would that this woman's head  
Were less golden about the hair ;

I would her lips were less red,  
And her face less deadly fair.

For this is the worst to bear —  
How came that redness there?

'Tis my heart, be sure, she eats for  
her food ;

And it makes one's whole flesh  
creep

To think that she drinks and drains  
my blood

Unawares, when I am asleep.

How else could those red lips  
keep

Their redness so damson-deep?

There's a thought like a serpent,  
slips

Ever into my heart and head, —

There are plenty of women, alive  
and human,

One might woo, if one wished,  
and wed —

Women with hearts and brains, —  
ay, and lips

Not so very terribly red.

But to house with a corpse — and  
she so fair,

With that dim, unearthly, golden  
hair,

And those sad, serene, blue eyes,  
With their looks from who knows

where,

Which death has made so wise,

With the grave's own secret  
there —

It is more than a man can  
bear!  
It were better for me, ere I came  
nigh her, [her,  
This corpse — ere I looked upon  
Had they burned my body in flame  
and fire  
With a sorcerer's dishonor.  
For when the Devil hath made his  
lair,  
And lurks in the eyes of a fair  
young woman  
(To grieve a man's soul with her  
golden hair,  
And break his heart if his heart  
be human),  
Would not a saint despair  
To be saved by fast or prayer  
From perdition made so fair?

## CHANGE.

SHE is unkind, unkind!  
On the windy hill, to-day,  
I sat in the sound of the wind.  
I knew what the wind would say.  
It said . . . or seemed to my  
mind . . .  
"The flowers are falling away.  
The summer," . . . it said, . . .  
"will not stay,  
And Love will be left behind."  
The swallows were swinging them-  
selves  
In the leaden-gray air aloft;  
Flitting by tens and twelves,  
And returning oft and oft;  
Like the thousand thoughts in me,  
That went, and came, and went,  
Not letting me even be  
Alone with my discontent.  
The hard-vest weary vane  
Rattled, and moaned and was still,  
In the convent over the plain,  
By the side of the windy hill.  
It was sad to hear it complain,  
So fretful, and weak, and shrill,  
Again, and again, and in vain,  
While the wind was changing his  
will.

I thought of our walks last summer  
By the convent-walls so green;  
On the first kiss stolen from her,  
With no one near to be seen.  
I thought (as we wandered on,  
Each of us waiting to speak)  
How the daylight left us alone,  
And left his last light on her cheek.

The plain was as cold and gray  
(With its villas like glimmering  
shells)  
As some north-ocean bay.  
All dumb in the church were the  
bells.  
In the mist, half a league away,  
Lay the little white house where  
she dwells.

I thought of her face so bright,  
By the firelight bending low  
O'er her work so neat and white;  
Of her singing so soft and slow;  
Of her tender-toned "Good-night;"  
But a very few nights ago.

O'er the convent doors, I could see  
A pale and sorrowful-eyed  
Madonna looking at me,  
As when Our Lord first died.

There was not a lizard or spider  
To be seen on the broken walls.  
The ruts, with the rain, had grown  
wider  
And blacker since last night's falls.  
O'er the universal dulness  
There broke not a single beam.  
I thought how my love at its fulness  
Had changed like a change in a  
dream.

The olives were shedding fast  
About me, to left and right,  
In the lap of the scornful blast  
Black berries and leaflets white.  
I thought of the many romances  
One wintry word can blight;  
Of the tender and timorous fancies  
By a cold look put to flight.

How many noble deeds  
Strangled perchance at their birth!  
The smoke of the burning weeds  
Came up with the steam of the  
earth,

From the red, wet ledges of soil,  
And the sere vines, row over row,—  
And the vineyard-men at their toil,  
Who sang in the vineyard below.

Last Spring, while I thought of her  
here,  
I found a red rose on the hill.  
There it lies, withered and sere!  
Let him trust to a woman who will.

I thought how her words had grown  
colder,  
And her fair face colder still,  
From the hour whose silence had  
told her

What has left me heart-broken and  
ill;  
And "Oh!" I thought, . . . "If I  
behold her

Walking there with him under the  
hill!"

O'er the mist, from the mournful  
city  
The belear lamps gleamed aghast,—  
—"She has neither justice, nor  
pity,"

I thought, . . . "All's over at last,"  
The cold eve came. One star  
Through a ragged gray gap forlorn  
Fell down from some region afar,  
And sickened as soon as born.  
I thought "How long and how lone  
The years will seem to be,  
When the last of her looks is gone,  
And my heart is silent in me!"

One streak of scornful gold,  
In the cloudy and billowy west,  
Burned with a light as cold  
As love in a much-wronged breast.  
I thought of her face so fair;  
Of her perfect bosom and arm;  
Of her deep sweet eyes and hair;  
Of her breath so pure and warm;

Of her foot so fine and fairy  
Through the meadows where she  
would pass;

Of the sweep of her skirts so airy  
And fragrant over the grass.

I thought . . . "Can I live without  
her

Whatever she do, or say?"

I thought . . . "Can I dare to doubt  
her,

Now when I have given away  
My whole self, body and spirit,  
To keep, or to cast aside,  
To dower or disinherit,—  
To use as she may decide?"

The West was beginning to close  
O'er the last light burning there.

I thought . . . "And when that  
goes,

The dark will be everywhere!"

Oh! well is it hidden from man

Whatever the Future may bring.

The bells in the church began

On a sudden to sound and swing.

The chimes on the gust were caught  
And rolled up the windy height.

I rose, and returned, and thought . . .

"I SHALL NOT SEE HER TO-  
NIGHT."

#### A CHAIN TO WEAR.

AWAY! away! The dream was  
vain.

We meet too soon, or meet too  
late:

Still wear, as best you may, the  
chain

Your own hands forged about  
your fate,

Who could not wait!

What! . . . you had given your life  
away

Before you found what most life  
misses?

Forsworn the bridal dream, you say,  
Of that ideal love, whose kisses

Are vain as this is!

Well, I have left upon your mouth  
The seal I know must burn there  
yet;

My claim is set upon your youth;  
My sign upon your soul is set:  
Dare you forget?

And you'll haunt, I know, where  
music plays,

Yet find a pain in music's tone;  
You'll blush, of course, when others  
praise

That beauty scarcely now your  
own.

What's done, is done!

For me, you say, the world is  
wide, —

Too wide to find the grave I seek!

Enough! whatever now betide,  
No greater pang can blanch my  
cheek.

Hush! . . . do not speak.

#### SILENCE.

WORDS of fire, and words of scorn,  
I have written. Let them go!

Words of love — heart-broken, torn,  
With this strong and sudden woe.

All my scorn, she could not doubt,  
Was but love turned inside out.

Silence, silence, still unmixed;

Long, unbroken, unexplained:

Not one word, one little word,

Even to show her touched or  
pained:

Silence, silence, all unbroken:

Not a sound, a sigh, a token.

Well, let silence gather round

All this shattered life of mine.

Shall I break it by a sound?

Let it grow, and be divine —

Divine as that Prometheus kept

When for his sake the sea-nymphs  
wept.

Let silence settle, still and deep;

As the mist, the thunder-cloud,

O'er the lonely blasted steep,

Which the red bolt hath not  
bowed,

Settle, to drench out the star,  
And cancel the blue vales afar.

In this silence I will sheathe  
The sharp edge and point of all.

Not a sigh my lips shall breathe;

Not a groan, whate'er befall.

And let this sworded silence be  
A fence 'twixt prying fools and me.

Let silence be about her name,  
And o'er the things which once  
have been:

Let silence cover up my shame,  
And annul that face, once seen

In fatal hours, and all the light  
Of those eyes extinguish quite.

In silence, I go forth alone

O'er the solemn mystery

Of the deeds which, to be done,

Yet undone in the future lie.

I peer in Time's high nests, and there  
Espy the callow brood of Care,

The fledgless nurselings of Regret,  
With beaks forever stretched for  
food:

But why should I forecount as yet,  
The ravage of that vulture brood?

O'er all these things let silence stay,  
And lie, like snow, along my way.

Let silence in this outraged heart

Abide, and seal these lips forever;

Let silence dwell with me apart

Beside the ever-babbling river

Of that loud life in towns, that runs  
Blind to the changes of the suns.

Ah! from what most mournful star,

Wasting down on evening's edge,

Or what barren isle afar

Flung by on some bare oceanledge,

Came the wicked hag to us,

That changed the fairy revel thus?

There were sounds from sweet gui-  
tars

Once, and lights from lamps of  
amber;

Both went up among the stars  
From many a perfumed palace-  
chamber:

Suddenly the place seemed dead;  
Light and music both were fled.

Darkness in each perfumed chamber;  
Darkness, silence, in the stars;  
Darkness on the lamps of amber;  
Silence in the sweet guitars:  
Darkness, silence, evermore  
Guard empty chamber, moveless  
door.

## NEWS.

NEWS, news, news, my gossiping  
friends!

I have wonderful news to tell.  
A lady, by me, her compliments  
sends;

And this is the news from Hell:

The Devil is dead. He died resigned,  
Though somewhat opprest by  
cares;

But his wife, my friends, is a woman  
of mind,  
And looks after her lord's affairs.

I have just come back from that  
wonderful place,

And kist hands with the Queen  
down there;

But I cannot describe Her Majesty's  
face,

It has filled me so with despair.

The place is not what you might  
suppose:

It is worse in some respects.

But all that I heard there, I must  
not disclose,

For the lady that told me objects.

The laws of the land are not Salique,  
But the King never dies, of course;

The new Queen is young, and pretty,  
and *chic*,

There are women, I think, that  
are worse.

But however that be, one thing I  
know,

And this I am free to tell;

The Devil, my friends, is a woman,  
just now;

'Tis a woman that reigns in Hell.

## COUNT RINALDO RINALDI.

'Tis a dark-purple, moonlighted mid-  
night:

There is music about on the air.  
And, where, through the water, fall  
flashing

The oars of each gay gondolier,  
The lamp-lighted ripples are dashing.

In the musical moonlighted air,  
To the music, in merriment; wash-  
ing,

And splashing, the black marble  
stair

That leads to the last garden-terrace,  
Where many a gay cavalier

And many a lady yet loiter,  
Round the Palace in festival there.

'Tis a terrace all paven mosaic, —  
Black marble, and green malachite;

Round an ancient Venetian Palace,  
Where the windows with lampions  
are bright.

'Tis an evening of gala and festival,  
Music, and passion, and light.

There is love in the nightingales'  
throats,

That sing in the garden so well:  
There is love in the face of the moon:

There is love in the warm languid  
glances

Of the dancers adown the dim  
dances:

There is love in the low languid notes  
That rise into rapture, and swell,

From viol, and flute, and bassoon.

The tree that bends down o'er the  
water

So black, is a black cypress-tree.  
And the statue, there, under the  
terrace,

Mnemosyne's statue must be.

There comes a black gondola slowly  
To the Palace in festival there :  
And the Count Rinaldo Rinaldi  
Has mounted the black marble  
stair.

There was nothing but darkness, and  
midnight,  
And tempest, and storm, in the  
breast

Of the Count Rinaldo Rinaldi,  
As his foot o'er the black marble  
prest :—

The glimmering black marble stair  
Where the weed in the green ooze  
is clinging,

That leads to the garden so fair,  
Where the nightingales softly are  
singing, —

Where the minstrels new music  
are stringing,

And the dancers for dancing prepare.

There rustles a robe of white satin :  
There's a footstep falls light by  
the stair :

There rustles a robe of white satin :  
There's a gleaming of soft golden  
hair :

And the Lady Irene Ricasoli  
Stands near the cypress-tree  
there, — [fair, —

Near Mnemosyne's statue so  
The Lady Irene Ricasoli,  
With the light in her long golden  
hair.

And the nightingales softly are sing-  
ing [air ;

In the mellow and moonlighted  
And the minstrels their viols are  
stringing ;

And the dancers for dancing pre-  
pare.

“ Siora,” the Count said unto her,  
“ The shafts of ill-fortune pursue  
me :

The old grief grows newer and newer,  
The old pangs are never at rest ;  
And the foes that have sworn to  
undo me [breast.

Have left me no peace in my

They have slandered, and wronged,  
and maligned me :

Though they broke not my sword  
in my hand,

They have broken my heart in my  
bosom [manned.

And sorrow my youth has un-  
But I love you, Irene, Irene,

With such love as the wretched  
alone

Can feel from the desert within them  
Which only the wretched have  
known !

And the heart of Rinaldo Rinaldi  
Dreads, Lady, no frown but your  
own.

To others be all that you are, love —  
A lady more lovely than most ;

To me — be a fountain, a star, love,  
That lights to his haven, the lost ;

A shrine that with tender devotion,  
The mariner kneeling, doth deek

With the dank weeds yet dripping  
from ocean, [wreck.

And the last jewel saved from the

“ None heeds us, beloved Irene !

None will mark if we linger or fly.

Amid all the mad masks in yon revel,

There is not an ear or an eye, —

Not one, — that will gaze or will  
listen ;

And, save the small star in the sky  
Which, to light us, so softly doth  
glisten,

There is none will pursue us, Irene.

O love me, O save me, I die !

I am thine, O be mine, O beloved !

“ Fly with me, Irene, Irene !

The moon drops : the morning is  
near,

My gondola waits by the garden  
And fleet is my own gondolier !”

What the Lady Irene Ricasoli,  
By Mnemosyne's statue in stone,

Where she leaned, 'neath the black  
cypress-tree,

To the Count Rinaldo Rinaldi

Replied then, it never was known

And known, now, it never will be.

But the moon hath been melted in morning:  
 And the lamps in the windows are dead:  
 And the gay cavaliers from the terrace,  
 And the ladies they laughed with, are fled;  
 And the music is husht in the viols:  
 And the minstrels, and dancers, are gone;  
 And the nightingales now in the garden,  
 [one:  
 From singing have ceased, one by one:  
 But the Count Rinaldo Rinaldi  
 Still stands, where he last stood, alone,  
 'Neath the black cypress-tree, near the water,  
 By Mnemosyne's statue in stone.  
 O'er his spirit was silence and midnight,  
 In his breast was the calm of despair.  
 He took, with a smile, from a casket  
 A single soft curl of gold hair, —  
 A wavy warm curl of gold hair,  
 And into the black-bosomed water  
 He flung it athwart the black stair.  
 The skies they were changing above him;  
 The dayn, it came cold on the air;  
 He drew from his bosom a kerchief —  
 "Would," he sighed, "that her face was less fair!  
 That her face was less hopelessly fair."  
 And folding the kerchief, he covered  
 The eyes of Mnemosyne there.

## THE LAST MESSAGE.

FLING the lattice open,  
 And the music plain you'll hear;  
 Lean out of the window,  
 And you'll see the lamplight clear.  
 There, you see the palace  
 Where the bridal is to-night.  
 You may shut the window.  
 Come here, to the light.

Take this portrait with you,  
 Look well before you go.  
 She can scarce be altered  
 Since a year ago.

Women's hearts change lightly,  
 (Truth both trite and olden!)  
 But blue eyes remain blue;  
 Golden hair stays golden.

Once I knew two sisters:  
 One was dark and grave  
 As the tomb; one radiant  
 And changeful as the wave.

Now away, friend, quickly!  
 Mix among the masks:  
 Say you are the bride's friend,  
 If the bridegroom asks.

If the bride have dark hair,  
 And an olive brow,  
 Give her this gold bracelet; —  
 Come and let me know.

If the bride have bright hair,  
 And a brow of snow,  
 In the great canal there  
 Quick the portrait throw:

And you'll merely give her  
 This poor faded flower.  
 Thanks! now leave your stilet  
 With me for an hour.

You're my friend: whatever  
 I ask you now to do,  
 If the case were altered,  
 I would do for you.

And you'll promise me, my mother  
 Shall never miss her son,  
 If anything should happen  
 Before the night is done.

## VENICE.

THE sylphs and ondines,  
 And the sea-kings and queens,  
 Long ago, long ago, on the waves  
 built a city,  
 As lovely as seems  
 To some bard, in his dreams,  
 The soul of his latest love-ditty.

Long ago, long ago, — ah! that was  
     long ago  
     Thick as gems on the chalices  
     Kings keep for treasure,  
     Where the temples and palaces  
     In this city of pleasure;  
 And the night broke out shining  
     With lamps and with festival,  
     O'er the squares, o'er the  
     streets;  
 And the soft sea went, pining  
     With love, through the musical,  
     Musical bridges, and marble  
     retreats  
 Of this city of wonder, where dwelt  
     the ondines,  
 Long ago, and the sylphs, and the  
     sea-kings and queens.  
     — Ah! that was long ago!  
     But the sylphs and ondines,  
     And the sea-kings and queens  
     Are fled under the waves:  
 And I glide, and I glide  
     Up the glimmering tide  
     Through a city of graves.  
 Here will I bury my heart,  
     Wrapt in the dream it  
     dreamed;  
 One grave more to the many!  
 One grave as silent as any;  
 Sculptured about with art, —  
     For a palace this tomb once  
     seemed.  
 Light lips have laughed there,  
     Bright eyes have beamed.  
     Revel and dance;  
     Lady and lover!  
 Pleasure hath quaffed there:  
     Beauty hath gleaned,  
     Love wooed Romance.  
     Now all is over!  
 And I glide, and I glide  
     Up the glimmering tide,  
 'Mid forms silently passing, as silent  
     as any,  
     Here, 'mid the waves,  
     In the city of graves,  
 To bury my heart — one grave more  
     to the many!

## ON THE SEA.

COME! breathe thou soft, or blow  
     thou bold,  
 Thy coming be it kind or cold,  
 Thou soul of the heedless ocean  
     wind; —  
 Little I rede and little I reckon,  
 Though the mast be snapt on the  
     mizzen-deck,  
 So thou blow her last kiss from my  
     neck,  
 And her memory from my mind!  
 Comrades around the mast,  
 The welkin is o'er cast:  
 One watch is wellnigh past —  
 Out of sight of shore at last!  
 Fade fast, thou falling shore,  
 With that fair false face of yore,  
 And the love, and the life, now o'er!  
 What she sought, that let her have —  
 The praise of traitor and knave,  
 The simper of coward and slave,  
 And the worm that clings and  
     stings —  
 The knowledge of nobler things.  
 But here shall the mighty sea  
 Make moan with my heart in me,  
 And her name be torn  
 By the winds in scorn,  
 In whose march we are moving free  
 I am free, I am free, I am free!  
 Hark! how the wild waves roar!  
 Hark! how the wild winds rave!  
 Courage, true hearts and brave,  
 Whom Fate can afflict no more!  
 Comrades, the night is long.  
 I will sing you an ancient song  
 Of a tale that was told  
 In the days of old,  
 Of a Baron blithe and strong, —  
 High heart and bosom bold,  
 To strive for the right with wrong!  
 "Who left his castled home,  
 When the Cross was raised in Rome,  
 And swore on his sword  
 To fight for the Lord,  
 And the banners of Christendom  
 To die or to overcome!



" In hauberk of mail, and helmet of  
 steel,  
 And armor of proof from head to  
 heel,  
 O, what is the wound which he shall  
 feel?  
 And where the foe that shall make  
 him reel?  
 True knight on whose crest the  
 cross doth shine!  
 They buckled his harness, brought  
 him his steed —  
 A stallion black of the land's best  
 breed —  
 Belted his spurs, and bade him God-  
 speed  
 'Mid the Paynim in Palestine.  
 But the wife that he loved, when  
 she poured him up  
 A last deep health in her golden cup,  
 Put poison into the wine.

" So he rode till the land he loved  
 grew dim,  
 And that poison began to work in  
 him,  
 A true knight chanting his Chris-  
 tian hymn,  
 With the cross on his gallant crest.  
 Eastward, aye, from the waning  
 west,  
 Toward the land where the bones  
 of the Saviour rest,  
 And the Battle of God is to win:  
 With his young wife's picture upon  
 his breast,  
 And her poisoned wine within.

" Alas! poor knight, poor knight!  
 He carries the foe he cannot fight  
 In his own true breast shut up.  
 He shall die or ever he fight for the  
 Lord,  
 And his heart be broken before his  
 sword.  
 He hath pledged his life

To a faithless wife,  
 In the wine of a poisoned cup!"  
 Comrade, thy hand in mine!  
 Pledge me in our last wine,  
 While all is dark on the brine.  
 My friend, I reckon not now  
 If the wild night-wind should blow  
 Our bark beyond the poles: —  
 To drift through fire or snow,  
 Out of reach of all we know —  
 Cold heart, and narrow brow,  
 Smooth faces, sordid souls!  
 Lost, like some pale crew  
 From Ophir, in golden galleys,  
 On a witch's island! who  
 Wander the tamarisk alleys,  
 Where the heaven is blue,  
 And the ocean too,  
 That murmurs among the valleys,  
 " Perish with all on board!"  
 So runs the vagrant fame —  
 Thy wife weds another lord,  
 My children forget my name,  
 While we count new stars by night.  
 Each wanders out of sight  
 Till the beard on his chin grows  
 white  
 And scant grow the curls on his  
 head.  
 One paces the placid hours  
 In dim enchanted bowers,  
 By a soft-eyed Panther led  
 To a magical milk-white bed  
 Of deep, pale poison-flowers.  
 With ruined gods one dwells,  
 In caverns among the fells,  
 Where, with desolate arms out-  
 spread,  
 A single tree stands dead,  
 Smitten by savage spells,  
 And striking a silent dread  
 From its black and blighted head  
 Through the horrible, hopeless  
 sultry dells  
 Of Elephanta, the Red.

## BOOK II.—IN FRANCE.

## "PRENSUS IN ÆGÆO."

Tis toil must help us to forget.  
 In strife, they say, grief finds repose.  
 Well, there's the game! I throw  
 the stakes:—  
 A life of war, a world of foes,  
 A heart that triumphs while it  
 breaks.  
 Some day I too, perchance, may  
 lose  
 This shade which memory o'er  
 me throws,  
 And laugh as others laugh, (who  
 knows?)  
 But ah, 'twill not be yet!

How many years since she and I  
 Walked that old terrace, hand-in-  
 hand!  
 Just one star in the rosy sky,  
 And silence on the summer land.  
 And she? . . .

I think I hear her sing  
 That song,—the last of all our  
 songs.

How all comes back!—thing after  
 thing,  
 The old life o'er me throngs!  
 But I must to the palace go;  
 The ambassador's to-morrow:  
 Here's little time for thought, I  
 know,  
 And little more for sorrow.  
 Already in the *porte-cochère*  
 The carriage sounds . . . my hat  
 and gloves!

I hear my friend's foot on the stair,—  
 How joyously it moves!  
 He must have done some wicked  
 thing  
 To make him tread so light:  
 Or is it only that the king  
 Admired his wife last night?  
 We talk of nations by the way,

And praise the Nuncio's manners,  
 And end with something fine to say  
 About the "allied banners."  
 'Tis well to mix with all conditions  
 Of men in every station:  
 I sup to-morrow with musicians,  
 Upon the invitation  
 Of my clever friend, the journalist,  
 Who writes the reading plays  
 Which no one reads; a socialist  
 Most social in his ways.  
 But I am sick of all the din  
 That's made in praising Verdi,  
 Who only knows a violin  
 Is not a hurdy-gurdy.

Here oft, while on a nerveless hand  
 An aching brow reclining,  
 Through this tall window where I  
 stand,  
 I see the great town shining.  
 Hard by, the restless Boulevart  
 roars,  
 Heard all the night through, even  
 in dreaming:  
 While from its hundred open doors  
 The many-headed Life is stream-  
 ing. [fares  
 Upon the world's wide thorough-  
 My lot is cast. So be it!  
 Each on his back his burthen bears,  
 And feels, though he may not see  
 it.

My life is not more hard than theirs  
 Who toil on either side:  
 They cry for quiet in their prayers,  
 And it is still denied.  
 But sometimes, when I stand alone,  
 Life pauses,—now and then:  
 And in the distance dies the moan  
 Of miserable men.  
 As in a dream (how strange!) I seem  
 To be lapsing, slowly, slowly,  
 From noise and strife, to a stiller  
 life,  
 Where all is husht and holy.

Ah, love! our way's in a stranger  
land.

We may not rest together.  
For an Angel takes me by the hand,  
And leads me . . . whither?  
whither?

A L'ENTRESOL.

ONE circle of all its golden hours  
The flitting hand of the Time-  
piece there,  
In its close white bower of china  
flowers,  
Hath rounded unaware:

While the firelight, flung from the  
flickering wall  
On the large and limpid mirror  
behind,  
Hath reddened and darkened down  
o'er all,  
As the fire itself declined.

Something of pleasure and some-  
thing of pain  
There lived in that sinking light.  
What is it?

Faces I never shall look at again,  
In places you never will visit,

Revealed themselves in each falter-  
ing ember,  
While, under a palely wavering  
flame,  
Half of the years life aches to re-  
member  
Reappeared, and died as they  
came.

To its dark Forever an hour hath  
gone  
Since either you or I have spoken:  
Each of us might have been sitting  
alone  
In a silence so unbroken.

I never shall know what made me  
look up  
(In this cushioned chair so soft  
and deep,  
By the table where, over the empty  
cup, I was leaning, half asleep)

To catch a gleam on the picture up  
there

Of the saint in the wilderness  
under the oak;  
And a light on the brow of the  
bronze Voltaire,  
Like the ghost of a cynical joke.

To mark, in each violet velvet fold  
Of the curtains that fall 'twixt  
room and room,  
The dip and dance of the manifold  
Shadows of rosy gloom.

O'er the Rembrandt there — the  
Caracci here —  
Flutter warmly the ruddy and  
wavering hues;  
And St. Anthony over his book has  
a leer  
At the little French beauty by  
Greuze.

There, — the Leda, weighed over  
her white swan's back,  
By the weight of her passionate  
kiss, ere it falls;  
O'er the ebony cabinet, glittering  
black  
Through its ivory cups and balls:

Your scissors and thimble, and work  
laid away,  
With its silks, in the scented rose-  
wood box;  
The journals, that tell truth every  
day,  
And that novel of Paul de Kock's:

The flowers in the vase, with their  
bells shut close  
In a dream of the far green fields  
where they grew;  
The cards of the visiting people  
and shows  
In that bowl with the sea-green  
hue.

Your shawl, with a queenly droop  
of its own,  
Hanging over the arm of the crim-  
son chair:

And, last, — yourself, as silent as  
stone,  
In a glow of the firelight there!

I thought you were reading all this  
time.

And was it some wonderful page  
of your book  
Telling of love, with its glory and  
crime,

That has left you that sorrowful  
look?

For a tear from those dark, deep,  
humid orbs

'Neath their lashes, so long, and  
soft, and sleek,

All the light in your lustrous eyes  
absorbs,

As it trembles over your cheek.

Were you thinking how we, sitting  
side by side,

Might be dreaming miles and  
miles apart?

Or if lips could meet over a gulf so  
wide

As separates heart from heart?

Ah, well! when time is flown, how  
it fled

It is better neither to ask nor tell.  
Leave the dead moments to bury  
their dead.

Let us kiss and break the spell!

Come, arm in arm, to the window  
here;

Draw by the thick curtain, and see  
how, to-night,

In the clear and frosty atmosphere,  
The lamps are burning bright.

All night, and forever, in yon great  
town,

The heaving Boulevart flares and  
roars;

And the streaming Life flows up  
and down

From its hundred open doors.

It is scarcely so cold, but I and you,  
With never a friend to find us out,  
May stare at the shops for a mo-  
ment or two,  
And wander awhile about.

For when in the crowd we have  
taken our place,  
(— Just two more lives to the  
mighty street there!)

Knowing no single form or face  
Of the men and women we meet  
there, —

Knowing, and known of, none in the  
whole

Of that crowd all round, but our  
two selves only,

We shall grow nearer, soul to soul,  
Until we feel less lonely.

Here are your bonnet and gloves,  
dear. There, —

How stately you look in that long  
rich shawl!

Put back your beautiful golden hair,  
That never a curl may fall.

Stand in the firelight . . . so, . . .  
as you were, —

O my heart, how fearfully like  
her she seemed!

Hide me up from my own despair,  
And the ghost of a dream I  
dreamed!

#### TERRA INCOGNITA.

How sweet it is to sit beside her,  
When the hour brings nought  
that's better!

All day in my thoughts to hide her,  
And, with fancies free from fetter,  
Half remember, half forget her.

Just to find her out by times  
In my mind, among sweet fancies  
Laid away:

In the fall of mournful rhymes;  
In a dream of distant climes;  
In the sights a lonely man sees

At the drooping of the day;  
 Grave or gay.  
 As a maiden sometimes locks  
 With old letters, whose contents  
 Tears have faded,  
 In an old worm-eaten box,  
 Some sweet packet of faint  
 scents,  
 Silken-braided;  
 And forgets it:  
 Careless, so I hide  
 In my life her love, —  
 Fancies on each side,  
 Memories heaped above: —  
 There it lies, unspied:  
 Nothing frets it.  
 On a sudden, when  
 Deed, or word, or glance,  
 Brings me back again  
 To the old romance,  
 With what rapture then, —  
 When, in its completeness,  
 Once my heart hath found it.  
 By each sense detected,  
 Steals on me the sweetness  
 Of the air around it,  
 Where it lies neglected!  
 Shall I break the charm of this  
 In a single minute?  
 For some chance with fuller bliss  
 Proffered in it?  
 Secrets unsealed by a kiss,  
 Could I win it!  
 'Tis so sweet to linger near her,  
 Idly so!  
 Never reckoning, while I hear her  
 Whispering low,  
 If each whisper will make clearer  
 Bliss or woe;  
 Never roused to hope or fear her  
 Yes or No! •  
 What if, seeking something more  
 Than before,  
 All that's given I displace —  
 Calm and grace —  
 Nothing ever can restore,  
 As of yore,  
 That old quiet face!  
 Quiet skies in quiet lakes,  
 No wind wakes,

All their beauty double:  
 But a single pebble breaks  
 Lake and sky to trouble;  
 Then dissolves the foam it makes  
 In a bubble.  
 With the pebble in my hand,  
 Here, upon the brink, I stand;  
 Meanwhile, standing on the brink,  
 Let me think!  
 Not for her sake, but for mine,  
 Let those eyes unquestioned shine,  
 Half divine:  
 Let no hand disturb the rare  
 Smoothness of that lustrous hair  
 Anywhere:  
 Let that white breast never break  
 Its calm motion — sleep or wake —  
 For my sake.  
 Not for her sake, but for mine,  
 All I might have, I resign.  
 Should I glow  
 To the hue — the fragrance fine —  
 The mere first sight of the wine,  
 If I drained the goblet low?  
 Who can know?  
 With her beauty like the snow,  
 Let her go! Shall I repine  
 That no idle breath of mine  
 Melts it? No! 'Tis better so.  
 All the same, as she came,  
 With her beauty like the snow,  
 Cold, unspotted, let her go!

## A REMEMBRANCE.

'Twas eve and May when last,  
 through tears,  
 Thine eyes sought mine, thy hand  
 my hand.  
 The night came down her silent  
 spheres,  
 And up the silent land.  
 In silence, too, my thoughts were  
 furled,  
 Like ring-doves in the dreaming  
 grove.  
 Who would not lightly lose the world  
 To keep such love?

But many Mays, with all their flowers,  
 Are faded since that blissful time—  
 The last of all my happy hours  
 I' the golden clime!

By hands not thine these wreaths  
 were curled  
 That hide the care my brows  
 above:  
 And I have almost gained the world,  
 But lost that love.

As though for some serene dead  
 brow,  
 These wreaths for me I let them  
 twine,  
 I hear the voice of praise, and know  
 It is not thine.

How many long and lonely days  
 I strove with life thy love to gain!  
 I know my work was worth thy  
 praise;  
 But all was vain.

Vain Passion's fire, vain Music's art!  
 For who from thorns grape-  
 bunches gathers?  
 What depth is in the shallow heart?  
 What weight in feathers?

As drops the blossom, ere the growth  
 Of fruit, on some autumnal tree,  
 I drop from my changed life, its  
 youth  
 And joy in thee:

And look beyond, and o'er thee, —  
 right  
 To some sublimer end than lies  
 Within the compass of the sight  
 Of thy cold eyes.

With thine my soul hath ceased its  
 strife:  
 Thy part is filled; thy work is  
 done;  
 Thy falsehood buried in my life,  
 And known to none.

Yet still will golden memories frame  
 Thy broken image in my heart,  
 And love for what thou wast shut  
 blame  
 From what thou art.

In Life's long galleries, haunting-  
 eyed,  
 Thy pictured face no change shall  
 show;  
 Like some dead Queen's who lived  
 and died  
 An age ago!

#### MADAME LA MARQUISE.

THE folds of her wine-dark violet  
 dress  
 Glow over the sofa, fall on fall,  
 As she sits in the air of her loveliness  
 With a smile for each and for all.

Half of her exquisite face in the  
 shade,  
 Which o'er it the screen in her  
 soft hand flings:

Through the gloom glows her hair  
 in its odorous braid:  
 In the firelight are sparkling her  
 rings.

As she leans, — the slow smile half  
 shut up in her eyes  
 Beams the sleepy, long, silk-soft  
 lashes beneath;

Through her crimson lips, stirred  
 by her faint replies,  
 Breaks one gleam of her pearl-  
 white teeth.

As she leans, — where your eye, by  
 her beauty subdued,  
 Droops — from under warm  
 fringes of broidery white

The slightest of feet — silken-slip-  
 pered, protrude,  
 For one moment, then slip out of  
 sight.

As I bend o'er her bosom, to tell  
 her the news,  
 The faint scent of her hair, the  
 approach of her cheek,

The vague warmth of her breath, all  
my senses suffuse  
With HERSELF: and I tremble to  
speak.

So she sits in the curtained, luxu-  
rious light  
Of that room, with its porcelain,  
and pictures, and flowers,  
When the dark day's half done, and  
the snow flutters white,  
Past the windows in feathery  
showers.

All without is so cold, — 'neath the  
low leaden sky!  
Down the bald, empty street, like  
a ghost, the gendarme  
Stalks surly: a distant carriage  
hums by: —  
All within is so bright and so  
warm!

Here we talk of the schemes and  
the scandals of court,  
How the courtesan pushes: the  
charlatan thrives:  
We put horns on the heads of our  
friends, just for sport:  
Put intrigues in the heads of their  
wives.

Her warm hand, at parting, so  
strangely thrilled mine,  
That at dinner I scarcely remark  
what they say, —

Drop the ice in my soup, spill the  
salt in my wine,  
Then go yawn at my favorite play.

But she drives after noon: — then's  
the time to behold her,  
With her fair face half hid, like a  
ripe peeping rose,  
'Neath that veil, — o'er the velvets  
and furs which enfold her,  
Leaning back with a queenly re-  
pose, —

As she glides up the sunlight! . . .  
You'd say she was made  
To loll back in a carriage, all day,  
with a smile,

And at dusk, on a sofa, to her fair  
the shade  
Of soft lamps, and be wooed for  
a while.

Could we find out her heart through  
that velvet and lace!

Can it beat without ruffling her  
sumptuous dress?

She will show us her shoulder, her  
bosom, her face;

But what the heart's like, we must  
guess.

With live women and men to be  
found in the world —

(— Live with sorrow and sin, —  
live with pain and with pas-  
sion, —)

Who could live with a doll, though  
its locks should be curled,

And its petticoats trimmed in the  
fashion?

'Tis so fair! . . . would my bite, if  
I bit it, draw blood?

Will it cry if I hurt it? or scold  
if I kiss?

Is it made, with its beauty, of wax  
or of wood?

. . . . Is it worth while to guess  
at all this?

### THE NOVEL.

"HERE, I have a book at last —  
Sure," I thought, "to make you  
weep!"

But a careless glance you cast  
O'er its pages, half asleep.

'Tis a novel, — a romance,  
(What you will) of youth, of home,  
And of brilliant days in France,  
And long moonlit nights in Rome.

'Tis a tale of tears and sins,  
Of love's glory and its gloom;  
In a ball-room it begins,  
And it ends beside a tomb;

But  
an  
in  
217

too,  
leaves more  
and blue  
e vale;  
nd fair:  
seen it lie  
n-bed, where  
atch her die,  
Wept the hills  
You, I think, had wept as well;  
For the patience in her face  
(Where the dying sunbeam fell)  
Had such strange heart-breaking  
grace.  
There's a lover, eager, bold,  
Knocking at the convent gate;  
But that little hand grows cold,  
And the lover knocks too late.  
There's a high-born lady stands  
At a golden mirror, pale;  
Something makes her jewelled hands  
Tremble, as she hears the tale  
Which her maid (while weaving  
roses  
For the ball, through her dark  
hair)  
Mixed with other news, discloses.  
O, to-night she will look fair!  
There's an old man, feeble-handed,  
Counting gold . . . "My son  
shall wed  
With the Princess, as I planned it,  
Now that little girl is dead."  
There's a young man, sullen, husht,  
By remorse and grief unmanned,  
With a withered primrose crusht  
In his hot and feverish hand.  
There's a broken-hearted woman,  
Haggard, desolate, and wild,  
Says . . . "The world hath grown  
inhuman!  
Bury me beside my child."  
And the little god of this world  
Hears them, laughing in his  
sleeve,

He is master still in his world,  
There's another, we believe.  
Of this history every part  
You have seen, yet did not heed  
it;  
For 'tis written in my heart,  
And you have not learned to read  
it.

## AUX ITALIENS.

At Paris it was, at the Opera  
there;—  
And she looked like a queen in a  
book, that night,  
With the wreath of pearl in her ra-  
ven hair,  
And the brooch on her breast, so  
bright.  
Of all the operas that Verdi wrote,  
The best, to my taste, is the Tro-  
vatore:  
And Mario can soothe with a tenor  
note  
The souls in Purgatory.  
The moon on the tower slept soft as  
snow:  
And who was not thrilled in the  
straughtest way,  
As we heard him sing, while the gas  
burned low,  
"Non ti scordar di me" ?  
The Emperor there, in his box of  
state,  
Looked grave, as if he had just  
then seen  
The red flag wave from the city-gate,  
Where his eagles in bronze had  
been.  
The Empress, too, had a tear in her  
eye.  
You'd have said that her fancy  
had gone back again,  
For one moment, under the old blue  
sky,  
To the old glad life in Spain.



Well! there in our front-row box  
 we sat,  
 Together, my bride-betrothed and  
 I;  
 My gaze was fixed on my opera-hat,  
 And hers on the stage hard by.  
 And both were silent, and both  
 were sad.  
 Like a queen, she leaned on her  
 full white arm,  
 With that regal, indolent air she  
 had;  
 So confident of her charm!

I have not a doubt she was thinking  
 then  
 Of her former lord, good soul  
 that he was!  
 Who died the richest and roundest  
 of men,  
 The Marquis of Carabas.

I hope that, to get to the kingdom  
 of heaven,  
 Through a needle's eye he had  
 not to pass.  
 I wish him well, for the jointure  
 given  
 To my lady of Carabas.

Meanwhile, I was thinking of my  
 first love,  
 As I had not been thinking of  
 aught for years,  
 Till over my eyes there began to  
 move  
 Something that felt like tears.

I thought of the dress that she wore  
 last time,  
 When we stood, 'neath the cy-  
 press-trees, together,  
 In that lost land, in that soft clime,  
 In the crimson evening weather:

Of that muslin dress (for the eve  
 was hot),  
 And her warm white neck in its  
 golden chain,  
 And her full, soft hair, just tied in a  
 knot,  
 And falling loose again:

And the jasmin-flower in her fair  
 young breast:  
 (O the faint, sweet smell of that  
 jasmin-flower!)

And the one bird singing alone to  
 his nest:  
 And the one star over the tower.

I thought of our little quarrels and  
 strife;  
 And the letter that brought me  
 back my ring.  
 And it all seemed then, in the waste  
 of life,  
 Such a very little thing!

For I thought of her grave below  
 the hill,  
 Which the sentinel cypress-trees  
 stands over.  
 And I thought . . . "were she only  
 living still,  
 How I could forgive her, and love  
 her!"

And I swear, as I thought of her  
 thus, in that hour,  
 And of how, after all, old things  
 were best,  
 That I smelt the smell of that jas-  
 min-flower,  
 Which she used to wear in her  
 breast.

It smelt so faint, and it smelt so  
 sweet,  
 It made me creep, and it made me  
 cold!

Like the scent that steals from the  
 crumbling sheet  
 When a mummy is half unrolled.

And I turned and looked. She was  
 sitting there  
 In a dim box, over the stage;  
 and drest  
 In that muslin dress, with that full  
 soft hair,  
 And that jasmin in her breast!

I was here: and she was there:  
 And the glittering horseshoe  
 curved between:—

From my bride-betrothed, with her  
raven hair,  
And her sumptuous, scornful  
mien.

To my early love, with her eyes  
downcast,  
And over her primrose face the  
shade,

In short, from the Future back to  
the Past

There was but a step to be made.

To my early love from my future  
bride

One moment I looked. Then I  
stole to the door,  
I traversed the passage; and down  
at her side,

I was sitting, a moment more.

My thinking of her, or the music's  
strain,

Or something which never will  
be exprest,  
Had brought her back from the  
grave again,

With the jasmín in her breast.

She is not dead. and she is not wed!  
But she loves me now, and she  
loved me then!

And the very first word that her  
sweet lips said,

My heart grew youthful again.

The Marchioness there, of Carabas,  
She is wealthy, and young, and  
handsome still,

And but for her . . . well, we'll let  
that pass,

She may marry whomever she  
will.

But I will marry my own first love,  
With her primrose face: for old  
things are best,

And the flower in her bosom, I prize  
it above

The brooch in my lady's breast.

The world is filled with folly and  
sin,

And Love must cling where it  
can, I say:

For Beauty is easy enough to win;  
But one isn't loved every day.

And I think, in the lives of most  
women and men,

There's a moment when all would  
go smooth and even,

If only the dead could find out when  
To come back, and be forgiven.

But O the smell of that jasmín  
flower!

And O that music! and O the way  
That voice rang out from the donjou  
tower

*Non ti scordar di me,  
Non ti scordar di me!*

#### PROGRESS.

WHEN Liberty lives loud on every  
lip,

But Freedom moans,  
Trampled by Nations whose faint  
foot-falls slip

Round bloody thrones;  
When, here and there, in dungeou  
and in thrall,

Or exile pale,  
Like torches dying at a funeral,  
Brave natures fail:

When Truth, the armed archangel,  
stretches wide

God tromp in vain,  
And the world, drowsing, turns up-  
on its side

To drowse again;  
O Man, whose course hath called it-  
self sublime

Since it began,  
What art thou in such dying age of  
time,

As man to man?

When Love's last wrong hath been  
forgotten coldly,

As First Love's face:  
And, like a rat that comes to wanton  
boldly

In some lone place,

Once festal, — in the realm of light  
 and laughter  
 Grim Doubt appears ;  
 Whilst weird suggestions from  
 Death's vague Hereafter,  
 O'er ruined years,  
 Creep, dark and darker, with new  
 dread to mutter  
 Through Life's long shade,  
 Yet make no more in the chill breast  
 the flutter  
 Which once they made :  
 Whether it be, — that all doth at the  
 grave  
 Round to its term,  
 That nothing lives in that last dark-  
 ness, save  
 The little worm,  
 Or whether the tired spirit prolong  
 its course  
 Through realms unseen, —  
 Secure, that unknown world cannot  
 be worse  
 Than this hath been ;  
 Then when through Thought's gold  
 chain, so frail and slender,  
 No link will meet ;  
 When all the broken harps of  
 Language render  
 No sound that's sweet :  
 When, like torn books, sad days  
 weigh down each other  
 I' the dusty shelf ;  
 O Man, what art thou, O my friend,  
 my brother,  
 Even to thyself ?

## THE PORTRAIT.

MIDNIGHT past! Not a sound of  
 aught  
 Through the silent house, but the  
 wind at his prayers.  
 I sat by the dying fire, and thought  
 Of the dear dead woman up stairs.  
 A night of tears! for the gusty rain  
 Had ceased, but the eaves were  
 dripping yet ;

And the moon looked forth, as  
 though in pain,  
 With her face all white and wet:  
 Nobody with me my watch to keep  
 But the friend of my bosom, the  
 man I love :  
 And grief had sent him fast to sleep  
 In the chamber up above.  
 Nobody else, in the country place  
 All round, that knew of my loss  
 beside,  
 But the good young Priest with the  
 Raphael-face, [died.  
 Who confessed her when she  
 That good young Priest is of gentle  
 nerve,  
 And my grief had moved him be-  
 yond control ;  
 For his lip grew white, as I could  
 observe,  
 When he speeded her parting soul.  
 I sat by the dreary hearth alone :  
 I thought of the pleasant days of  
 yore :  
 I said "the staff of my life is gone :  
 The woman I loved is no more.  
 "On her cold, dead bosom my por-  
 trait lies,  
 Which next to her heart she used  
 to wear —  
 Haunting it o'er with her tender  
 eyes  
 When my own face was not there.  
 "It is set all round with rubies red,  
 And pearls which a Peri might  
 have kept.  
 For each ruby there, my heart hath  
 bled :  
 For each pearl, my eyes have  
 wept."  
 And I said — "the thing is precious  
 to me :  
 They will bury her soon in the  
 churchyard clay ;  
 It lies on her heart, and lost must  
 be,  
 If I cō not take it away."

I lighted my lamp at the dying  
flame,  
And crept up the stairs that  
creaked for fright,  
Till into the chamber of death I  
came,

Where she lay all in white.

The moon shone over her winding-  
sheet.

There, stark she lay on her carven  
bed :

Seven burning tapers about her feet,  
And seven about her head.

As I stretched my hand, I held my  
breath ;

I turned as I drew the curtains  
apart :

I dared not look on the face of  
death :

I knew where to find her heart.

I thought, at first, as my touch fell  
there,

It had warmed that heart to life,  
with love ;

For the thing I touched was warm,  
I swear,

And I could feel it move.

'Twas the hand of a man, that was  
moving slow

O'er the heart of the dead, — from  
the other side ;

And at once the sweat broke over  
my brow,

“Who is robbing the corpse?” I  
cried.

Opposite me by the tapers' light,

The friend of my bosom, the man  
I loved,

Stood over the corpse and all as  
white,

And neither of us moved.

“What do you here, my friend?”

. . . The man

Looked first at me, and then at  
the dead.

“There is a portrait here,” he be-  
gan ;

“There is. It is mine,” I said.

Said the friend of my bosom, “yours  
no doubt,

The portrait was, till a month ago,  
When this suffering angel took that  
out,

And placed mine there, I know.”

“This woman, she loved me well,”  
said I.

“A month ago,” said my friend  
to me ;

“And in your throat,” I groaned,  
you lie !”

He answered . . . “let us see.”

“Enough !” I returned, “let the  
dead decide :

And whose soever the portrait  
prove,

His shall it be, when the cause is  
tried,

Where Death is arraigned by  
Love.”

We found the portrait there, in its  
place :

We opened it, by the tapers' shine :  
The gems were all unchanged : the  
face

Was — neither his nor mine.

“One nail drives out another, at  
least !

The face of the portrait there,” I  
cried,

“Is our friend's, the Raphael-  
faced young Priest,

Who confessed her when she  
died.”

The setting is all of rubies red,

And pearls which a Peri might  
have kept.

For each ruby there my heart hath  
bled :

For each pearl my eyes have wept.

#### ASTARTE.

WHEN the latest strife is lost, and  
all is done with,

Ere we slumber in the spirit and  
the brain,

We drowse back, in dreams, to days  
that life begun with,  
And their tender light returns to  
us again.

I have cast away the tangle and the  
torment  
Of the cords that bound my life  
up in a mesh :  
And the pulse begins to throb that  
long lay dormant  
'Neath their pressure; and the  
old wounds bleed afresh.

I am touched again with shades of  
early sadness,  
Like the summer-cloud's light  
shadow in my hair :  
I am thrilled again with breaths of  
boyish gladness,  
Like the scent of some last prim-  
rose on the air.

And again she comes, with all her  
silent graces,  
The lost woman of my youth, yet  
unpossest :  
And her cold face so unlike the  
other faces  
Of the women whose dead lips I  
since have prest.

The motion and the fragrance of  
her garments  
Seem about me, all the day long,  
in the room :

And her face, with its bewildering  
old endearments  
Comes at night between the cur-  
tains, in the gloom.

When vain dreams are stirred with  
sighing, near the morning,  
To my own her phantom lips I  
feel approach :

And her smile, at eve, breaks o'er  
me without warning  
From his speechless, pale, per-  
petual reproach.

When Life's dawning glimmer yet  
had all the tint there  
Of the orient, in the freshness of  
the grass,

(Ah, what feet since then have  
trodden out the print there!)  
Did her soft, her silent footsteps  
fall, and pass.

They fell lightly, as the dew falls,  
'mid ungathered  
Meadow-flowers; and lightly lingered  
with the dew.  
But the dew is gone, the grass is  
dried and withered,  
And the traces of those steps  
have faded too.

Other footsteps fall about me, —  
faint, uncertain,  
In the shadow of the world, as it  
recedes :  
Other forms peer through the half-  
uplifted curtain  
Of that mystery which hangs be-  
hind the creeds.

What is gone, is gone forever. And  
new fashions  
May replace old forms which noth-  
ing can restore :  
But I turn from sighing back de-  
parted passions  
With that pining at the bosom as  
of yore.

I remember to have murmured, morn  
and even,  
"Though the Earth dispart these  
Earthlies, face from face,  
Yet the Heavenlies shall surely join  
in Heaven,  
For the spirit hath no bonds in  
time or space.

"Where it listeth, there it bloweth ;  
all existence  
Is its region; and it houseth,  
where it will.

I shall feel her through immeasur-  
able distance,  
And grow nearer and be gathered  
to her still.

“ If I fail to find her out by her golden tresses,  
 Brows, and breast, and lips, and  
 language of sweet strains,  
 I shall know her by the traces of  
 dead kisses,  
 And that portion of myself which  
 she retains.”

But my being is confused with new  
 experience,  
 And changed to something other  
 than it was;  
 And the Future with the Past is set  
 at variance;  
 And Life falters with the burthens  
 which it has.

Earth's old sins press fast behind  
 me, weakly wailing:  
 Faint before me fleets the good I  
 have not done:  
 And my search for her may still be  
 unavailing  
 'Mid the spirits that are passed  
 beyond the sun.

#### AT HOME DURING THE BALL.

'Tis hard upon the dawn, and yet  
 She comes not from the Ball.  
 The night is cold, and bleak, and  
 wet,  
 And the snow lies over all.

I praised her with her diamonds  
 on:—  
 And, as she went, she smiled.  
 And yet I sighed, when she was  
 gone,  
 Above our sleeping child.

And all night long, as soft and slow  
 As falls the falling rain,  
 The thoughts of days gone long ago  
 Have filled my heart again.

Once more I hear the Rhine rush  
 down,  
 (I hear it in my mind!)  
 Once more, about the sleeping town,  
 The lamps wink in the wind.

The narrow, silent street I pass:  
 The house stands o'er the river:  
 A light is at the casement-glass,  
 That leads my soul forever.

I feel my way along the gloom,  
 Stair after stair I push the door;  
 I find no change within the room,  
 And all things as of yore.

One little room was all we had  
 For June and for December.  
 The world is wide, but O how sad  
 It seems, when I remember!

The cage with the canary-bird  
 Hangs in the window still:  
 The small red rose-tree is not stirred  
 Upon the window-sill.

Wide open her piano stands;  
 — That song I made to ease  
 A passing pain while her soft hands  
 Went faintly o'er the keys!

The fire within the stove burns  
 down;  
 The light is dying fast.  
 How dear is all it shines upon,  
 That firelight of the Past!

No sound! the drowsy Dutch-clock  
 ticks.  
 O, how should I forget  
 The slender ebon crucifix,  
 That by her bed is set?

Her little bed is white as snow, —  
 How dear that little bed!  
 Sweet dreams about the curtains go  
 And whisper round her head.

That gentle head sleeps o'er her arm  
 — Sleeps all its soft brown hair:  
 And those dear clothes of hers, yet  
 warm,  
 Droop open on the chair.

Yet warm the snowy petticoat!  
 The dainty corset too!  
 How warm the ribbon from her  
 throat,  
 And warm each little shoe!

Lie soft, dear arm upon the pillow!  
 Sleep, foolish little head!  
 Ah, well she sleeps! I know the  
 willow  
 That curtains her cold bed. —

Since last I trod that silent street  
 'Tis many a year ago:  
 And, if I there could set my feet  
 Once more, I do not know.

If I should find it where it was,  
 That house upon the river:  
 But the light that lit the casement-  
 glass  
 I know is dark forever.

Hark! wheels below, . . . my lady's  
 knock!  
 — Farewell, the old romance! —  
 Well, dear, you're late, — past four  
 o'clock! —  
 How often did you dance?

Not cooler from the crowning waltz,  
 She takes my half the pillow. —  
 Well, — well! — the women free  
 from faults  
 Have beds below the willow!

#### AT HOME AFTER THE BALL.

THE clocks are calling Three  
 Across the silent floors.  
 The fire in the library  
 Dies out; through the open doors  
 The red empty room you may see.

In the nursery, up stairs,  
 The child had gone to sleep,  
 Half-way 'twixt dreams and prayers,  
 When the hall-door made him leap  
 To its thunders unawares.

Like love in a worldly breast,  
 Alone in my lady's chamber,  
 The lamp burns low, suppress  
 'Mid satins of brodered amber,  
 Where she stands, half undrest:

Her bosom all unlaced:  
 Her cheeks with a bright red  
 spot:  
 Her long dark hair displaced,  
 Down streaming, heeded not,  
 From her white throat to her waist:  
 She stands up her full height,  
 With her ball-dress slipping down  
 her,  
 And her eyes as fixed and bright  
 As the diamond stars that crown  
 her, —  
 An awful, beautiful sight.  
 Beautiful, yes . . . with her hair  
 So wild, and her cheeks so flushed!  
 Awful, yes . . . for there  
 In her beauty she stands husht  
 By the pomp of her own despair!

And fixt there, without doubt,  
 Face to face with her own sorrow  
 She will stand, till, from without,  
 The light of the neighboring mor-  
 row  
 Creeps in, and finds her out.

With last night's music pealing  
 Youth's dirges in her ears:  
 With last night's lamps revealing,  
 In the charnels of old years,  
 The face of each dead feeling.

Ay, Madam, here alone  
 You may think, till your heart is  
 broken,  
 Of the love that is dead and done,  
 Of the days that, with no token,  
 Forevermore are gone. —

Weep if you can, beseech you!  
 There's no one by to curb you:  
 Your child's cry cannot reach you:  
 Your lord will not disturb you:  
 Weep! . . . what can weeping teach  
 you?

Your tears are dead in you.  
 "What harm, where all things  
 change,"  
 You say, "if we change too?  
 — The old still sunny Grange!  
 Ah, that's far off i' the dew.

“ Were not those pleasant hours,  
Ere I was what I am?  
My garden of fresh flowers!  
My milk-white weanling lamb!  
My bright laburnum bowers!

“ The orchard walls so trim!  
The redbreast in the thorn!  
The twilight soft and dim!  
The child's heart! eve and morn,  
So rich with thoughts of *him!*”

Hush! your weanling lamb is dead:  
Your garden trodden over.  
They have broken the farm shed:  
They have buried your first lover  
With the grass above his head.

Has the Past, then, so much power,  
You dare take not from the shelf  
That book with the dry flower,  
Lest it make you hang yourself  
For being yourself for an hour?

Why can't you let thought be  
For even a little while?  
There's nought in memory  
Can bring you back the smile  
Those lips have lost. Just see,

Here what a costly gem  
To-night in your hair you wore —  
Pearls on a diamond stem!  
When sweet things are no more,  
Better not think of them.

Are you saved by pangs that pained  
you,  
Is there comfort in all it cost you,  
Before the world had gained you,  
Before that God had lost you,  
Or your soul had quite disdained  
you?

For your soul (and this is worst  
To bear, as you well know)  
Has been watching you, from first,  
As sadly as God could do;  
And yourself yourself have curst.

Talk of the flames of Hell!  
We fuel ourselves, I conceive,  
The fire the Fiend lights. Well,

Believe or disbelieve,  
We know more than we tell!  
Surely you need repose!  
To-morrow again — the Ball.  
And you must revive the rose  
In your cheek, to bloom for all.  
Not go? . . . why the whole world  
goes.

To bed! to bed! 'Tis sad  
To find that Fancy's wings  
Have lost the hues they had.  
In thinking of these things  
Some women have gone mad.

AU CAFE \* \* \*.

A PARTY of friends, all light-hearted  
and gay,  
At a certain French café, where  
every one goes,  
Are met, in a well-curtained warm  
*cabinet*,  
Overlooking a street there, which  
every one knows.

The guests are, three ladies well  
known and admired:  
One adorns the *Lyrique*; one . . .  
I oft have beheld her  
At the *Vaudeville*, with raptures;  
the third lives retired  
“ *Dans ses meubles*” . . . (we all  
know her house) . . . Rue de  
Helder.

Besides these is a fourth . . . a  
young Englishman, lately  
Presented the round of the clubs  
in the town.

A taciturn Anglican coldness se-  
dately  
Invests him: unthawed by Clar-  
isse, he sits down.

But little he speaks, and but rarely  
he shares  
In the laughter around him; his  
smiles are but few;  
There's a sneer in the look that his  
countenance wears  
In repose; and fatigue in the  
eyes' weary blue.



There stare three Frenchmen. Three  
Frenchmen (thank heaven!)  
Are but rarely morose, with Cham-  
pagne and Bordeaux:

And their wit, and their laughter,  
suffices to leaven  
With mirth their mute guest's imi-  
tation of snow.

The dinner is done: the Lafitte in  
its basket,

The Champagne in its cooler, is  
passed in gay haste;

Whatever you wish for, you have  
but to ask it:

Here are coffee, cigars, and li-  
queurs to your taste.

And forth from the bottles the corks  
fly; and chilly,

The bright wine, in bubbling and  
blushing, confounds

Its warmth with the ice that it  
seethes round; and shrilly

(Till stifled by kisses) the laugh-  
ter resounds.

Strike, strike the piano, beat loud  
at the wall!

Let wealthy old Lycus with jeal-  
ousy groan

Next door, while fair Chloris re-  
sponds to the call,

Too fair to be supping with Lycus  
alone!<sup>1</sup>

Clarisse, with a smile, has subsided,  
opprest,

Half, perhaps, by Champagne . . .  
half, perhaps, by affection, —

In the arms of the taciturn, cold,  
English guest,

With, just rising athwart her im-  
perial complexion,

One tinge that young Evian himself  
have kist

From the fairest of Mænads that  
danced in his troop;

And her deep hair, unloosed from  
its sumptuous twist,  
Overshowering her throat and  
her bosom a-droop.

The soft snowy throat, and the  
round, dimpled chin,  
Upturned from the arm-fold where  
hangs the rich head!

And the warm lips apart, while the  
white lids begin

To close over the dark languid  
eyes which they shade!

And next to Clarisse (with her wild  
hair all wet

From the wine, in whose blush its  
faint fire-fly gold

She was steeping just now), the  
blue-eyed Juliette

Is murmuring her witty bad things  
to Arnold.

Cries Arnold to the dumb English  
guest . . . " *Mon ami,*

What's the matter? . . . you can't  
sing . . . well, speak, then, at  
least:

More grave, had a man seen a ghost,  
could he be?

*Mais quel drôle de farceur! . . .  
comme il a le vin triste!*"

And says Charles to Eugène (vainly  
seeking to borrow

Ideas from a yawn . . . " At the  
club there are three of us

With the Duke, and we play lans-  
quenet till to-morrow:

I am off on the spur . . . what  
say you? . . . will you be of  
us?

" *Mon enfant, tu me boudes — tu me  
boudes, cheri,*"

Sighs the soft Celestine on the  
breast of Eugène;

" *Ah bah! ne me fais pas poser, mon  
amie,*"

Laughs her lover, and lifts to his  
lips — the Champagne.

<sup>1</sup> " *Audeat invidus  
Dementem strepitum Lycus  
Et vicina seni non habilis Lyco.*"  
HORACE.

And loud from the bottles the corks  
 fly; and chilly  
 The wine gurgles up to its fine  
 crystal bounds.  
 While Charles rolls his paper cigars  
 round, how shrilly  
 (Till kist out) the laughter of Ju-  
 liette resounds!  
 Strike, strike the piano! beat loud  
 at the wall!  
 Let wealthy old Lycus with  
 jealousy groan  
 Next door, while fair Chloris re-  
 sponds to the call,  
 Too fair to be supping with Ly-  
 cus alone.  
 There is Celestine singing, and Eu-  
 gène is swearing. —  
 In the midst of the laughter, the  
 oaths, and the songs,  
 Falls a knock at the door; but  
 there's nobody hearing:  
 Each, uninterrupted, the revel  
 prolongs.  
 Said I . . . "nobody hearing"? one  
 only; — the guest,  
 The morose English stranger, so  
 dull to the charms  
 Of Clarisse, and Juliette, Celestine,  
 and the rest;  
 Who sits, cold as a stone, with a  
 girl in his arms.  
 Once, twice, and three times, he has  
 heard it repeated;  
 And louder, and fiercer, each time  
 the sound falls.  
 And his cheek is death pale, 'mid  
 the others so heated;  
 There's a step at the door, too, his  
 fancy recalls.  
 And he rises . . . (just so an automa-  
 ton rises, —  
 Some man of mechanics made  
 up, — that must move  
 In the way that the wheel moves  
 within him; — there lies his  
 Sole path fixt before him, below  
 and above).

He rises . . . and, scarcely a glance  
 casting on her,  
 Flings from him the beauty asleep  
 on his shoulder;  
 Charles springs to his feet; Eugène  
 mutters of honor;  
 But there's that in the stranger  
 that awes each beholder.  
 For the hue on his cheek, it is whiter  
 than whiteness:  
 The hair creeps on his head like a  
 strange living thing.  
 The lamp o'er the table has lost half  
 its brightness;  
 Juliette cannot laugh; Celestine  
 cannot sing.  
 He has opened the door in a silence  
 unbroken:  
 And the gaze of all eyes where he  
 stands is fixt wholly:  
 Not a hand is there raised; not a  
 word is there spoken:  
 He has opened the door; . . . and  
 there comes through it slowly  
 A woman, as pale as a dame on a  
 tombstone,  
 With desolate violet eyes, open  
 wide.  
 Her look, as she turns it, turns all  
 in the room stone:  
 She sits down on a sofa, the  
 stranger beside.  
 Her hair it is yellow, as moonlight  
 on water  
 Which stones in some eddy tor-  
 ment into waves;  
 Her lips are as red as new blood spilt  
 in slaughter;  
 Her cheek like a ghost's seen by  
 night o'er the graves.  
 Her place by the taciturn guest she  
 has taken;  
 And the glass at her side she has  
 filled with Champagne.  
 As she bows o'er the board, all the  
 revellers awaken.  
 She has pledged her mute friend,  
 and she fills up again.

Clarisse has awaked; and with shrieks leaves the table.

Juliette wakes, and faints in the arms of Arnold.

And Charles and Eugène, with what speed they are able,

Are off to the club, where this tale shall be told.

Celestine for her brougham, on the stairs, was appealing,

With hysterical sobs, to the surly *concierge*,

When a ray through the doorway stole to her, revealing

A sight that soon changed her appeal to "*La vierge*."

All the light-hearted friends from the chamber are fled:

And the café itself has grown silent by this.

From the dark street below, you can scarce hear a tread,

Save the Gendarme's, who reigns there as gloomy as Dis.

The shadow of night is beginning to flit:

Through the gray window shimmers the motionless town.

The ghost and the stranger, together they sit

Side by side at the table—the place is their own.

They nod and change glances, that pale man and woman;

For they both are well known to each other: and then

Some ghosts have a look that's so horribly human,

In the street you might meet them, and take them for men.

"Thou art changed, my beloved! and the lines have grown stronger,

And the curls have grown scander, that meet on thy brow.

Ah, faithless! and dost thou remember no longer

The hour of our passion, the words of thy vow?

"Thy kiss, on my lips it is burning forever!

I cannot sleep calm, for my bed is so cold.

Embrace me! close . . . closer . . . O let us part never,

And let all be again as it once was of old!"

So she murmurs repiningly ever. Her breath

Lifts his hair like a night-wind in winter. And he . . .

"Thy hand, O Irene, is icy as death, But thy face is unchanged in its beauty to me."

"'Tis so cold, my beloved one, down there, and so drear."

"Ah, thy sweet voice, Irene, sounds hollow and strange!"

"'Tis the chills of the grave that have changed it, I fear:

But the voice of my heart there's no chill that can change."

"Ha! thy pale cheek is flushed with a heat like my own.

Is it breath, is it flame, on thy lips that is burning?

Ha! thy heart flutters wild, as of old, 'neath thy zone.

And those cold eyes of thine fill with passionate yearning."

Thus, embracing each other, they bend and they waver,

And, laughing and weeping, converse. The pale ghost,

As the wine warms the grave-worm within her, grown braver,

Fills her glass to the brim, and proposes a toast.

"Here's a health to the glow-worm, Death's sober lamplighter,

That saves from the darkness below the gravestone

The tomb's pallid pictures . . . the sadder the brighter;

Shapes of beauty each stony-eyed corpse there hath known:

Mere rough sketches of life, where  
     a glimpse goes for all,  
     Which the Master keeps (all the  
     rest let the world have!)  
 But though only rough-scrawled on  
     the blank charnel wall,  
     Is their truth the less sharp, that  
     'tis sheathed in the grave?  
  
 Here's to Love . . . the prime pas-  
     sion . . . the harp that we  
     sung to  
     In the orient of youth, in the days  
     pure of pain;  
 The cup that we quaffed in: the  
     stirrup we sprung to,  
     So light, ere the journey was  
     made — and in vain!  
  
 "O the life that we lived once! the  
     beauty so fair once!  
     Let them go! wherefore weep for  
     what tears could not save?  
 What old trick set us aping the fools  
     that we were once,  
     And tickles our brains even under  
     the grave?  
  
 "There's a small stinging worm  
     which the grave ever breeds  
     From the folds of the shroud that  
     around us is spread  
 There's a little blind maggot that  
     revels and feeds  
     On the life of the living, the sleep  
     of the dead.  
  
 "To our friends! . . ." But the  
     full flood of dawn through the  
     pane,  
     Having slowly rolled down the  
     huge street there unheard  
 While the great, new, blue sky, o'er  
     the white Madeleine  
     Was wide opening itself), from her  
     lips washed the word;  
  
 Washed her face faint and fainter;  
     while, dimmer and dimmer,  
     In its seat, the pale form flickered  
     out like a flame,  
  
 As broader, and brighter, and fuller,  
     the glimmer  
     Of day through the heat-clouded  
     window became.  
  
 And the day mounts apace. Some  
     one opens the door.  
     In shuffles a waiter with sleepy  
     red eyes:  
 He stares at the cushions flung loose  
     on the floor,  
     On the bottles, the glasses, the  
     plates, with surprise.  
  
 Stranger still: he sees seated a man  
     at the table,  
     With his head on his hands: in a  
     slumber he seems,  
 So wild, and so strange, he no longer  
     is able  
     In silence to thrid through the  
     path of his dreams.  
  
 For he moans, and he mutters: he  
     moves and he motions:  
     To the dream that he dreams o'er  
     his wine-cup he pledges.  
 And his sighs sound, through sleep,  
     like spent winds over ocean's  
     Last verge, where the world hides  
     its outermost edges.  
  
 The gas-lamp falls sick in the tube:  
     and so, dying,  
     To the fumes of spilt wine, and  
     cigars but half smoked,  
 Adds the stench of its last gasp:  
     chairs broken are lying  
     All about o'er the carpet stained,  
     littered, and soaked.  
  
 A touch starts the sleeper. He  
     wakes. It is day.  
     And the beam that dispels all the  
     phantoms of night  
 Through the rooms sends its kindly  
     and comforting ray:  
     The streets are new-peopled: the  
     morning is bright.

And the city's so fair! and the dawn  
breaks so brightly!

With gay flowers in the market,  
gay girls in the street.

Whate'er the strange beings that  
visit us nightly,

When Paris awakes, from her  
smile they retreat.

I myself have, at morning, beheld  
them departing;

Some in masks, and in dominoes,  
footing it on;

Some like imps, some like fairies;  
at cockerow all starting,

And speedily flitting from sight  
one by one.

And that wonderful night-flower,  
Memory, that, tearful,

Unbosoms to darkness her heart  
full of dew,

Folds her leaves round again, and  
from day shrinks up fearful

In the cleft of her ruin, the shade  
of her yew.

This broad daylight life's strange  
enough: and wherever

We wander, or walk; in the club,  
in the streets;

Not a straw on the ground is too  
trivial to sever

Each man in the crowd from the  
others he meets.

Each walks with a spy or a jailor  
behind him

(Some word he has spoken, some  
deed he has done):

And the step, now and then, quick-  
ens, just to remind him,

In the crowd, in the sun, that he  
is not alone.

But 'tis hard, when by lamplight,  
'mid laughter and songs too,

Those return, . . . we have buried,  
and mourned for, and prayed  
for,

And done with . . . and, free of the  
grave it belongs to,

Some cheat drinks your health in  
the wine you have paid for.

Wreathe the rose, O Young Man:  
pour the wine. What thou hast

That enjoy all the days of thy  
youth. Spare thou naught.

Yet beware! . . . at the board sits a  
ghost — 'tis the Past;

In thy heart lurks a weird necro-  
mancer — 'tis Thought.

#### THE CHESS-BOARD.

MY little love, do you remember,  
Ere we were grown so sadly wise,

Those evenings in the bleak Decem-  
ber,

Curtained warm from the snowy  
weather,

When you and I played chess to-  
gether,

Checkmated by each other's eyes?  
Ah, still I see your soft white hand

Hovering warm o'er Queen and  
Knight.

Brave Pawns in valiant battle  
stand.

The double Castles guard the wings:  
The Bishop, bent on distant things,

Moves, sidling through the fight.  
Our fingers touch; our glances

meet,  
And falter; falls your golden hair

Against my cheek; your bosom  
sweet

Is heaving. Down the field, your  
Queen

Rides slow her soldiery all between,  
And checks me unaware.

Ah me! the little battle's done,  
Disperst is all its chivalry;

Full many a move, since then, have  
we

'Mid Life's perplexing checkers  
made,

And many a game with Fortune  
played, —

What is it we have won?  
This, this at least — if this alone; —

That never, never, never more,  
As in those old still nights of yore

(Ere we were grown so sadly wise),

Can you and I shut out the skies,  
Shut out the world, and wintry  
weather,  
And, eyes exchanging warmth  
with eyes,  
Play chess, as then we played, to-  
gether!

## SONG.

IF Sorrow have taught me anything,  
She hath taught me to weep for  
you;  
And if Falsehood have left me a tear  
to shed  
For Truth, these tears are true.  
If the one star left by the morning  
Be dear to the dying night,  
If the late lone rose of October  
Be sweetest to scent and sight,  
If the last of the leaves in December  
Be dear to the desolate tree,  
Remember, beloved, O remember  
How dear is your beauty to me!  
And more dear than the gold, is the  
silver  
Grief hath sown in that hair's  
young gold:  
And lovelier than youth is the lan-  
guage  
Of the thoughts that have made  
youth old;  
We must love, and unlove, and for-  
get, dear—  
Fashion and shatter the spell  
Of how many a love in a life, dear—  
Ere life learns to love once and  
love well.  
Then what matters it, yesterday's  
sorrow?  
Since I have outlived it—see!  
And what matter the cares of to-  
morrow,  
Since you, dear, will share them  
with me?  
To love it is hard, and 'tis harder  
Perchance to be loved again:  
But you'll love me, I know, now I  
love you.—

What I seek I am patient to gain  
To the tears I have shed, and regret  
not,  
What matter a few more tears?  
Or a few days' waiting longer,  
To one that has waited for years?  
Hush! lay your head on my breast,  
there.  
Not a word! . . . while I weep for  
your sake,  
Sleep, and forget me, and rest there:  
My heart will wait warm till you  
wake.  
For—if Sorrow have taught me any-  
thing [you;  
She hath taught me to weep for  
And if Falsehood have left me a tear  
to shed  
For Truth, these tears are true!

## THE LAST REMONSTRANCE.

YES! I am worse than thou didst  
once believe me.  
Worse than thou deem'st me now  
I cannot be—  
But say "the Fiend's no blacker,"  
. . . canst thou leave me?  
Where wilt thou flee?  
Where wilt thou bear the relics of  
the days  
Squandered round this dethronéd  
love of thine?  
Hast thou the silver and the gold to  
raise  
A new God's shrine?  
Thy cheek hath lost its roundness  
and its bloom:  
Who will forgivethose signs where  
tears have fed  
On thy once lustrous eyes,—save *he*  
for whom  
Those tears were shed?  
Know I not every grief whose course  
hath sown  
Lines on thy brow, and silver in  
thy hair?  
Will new love learn the language,  
mine alone  
Hath graven there?

<p>Despite the blemisht beauty of thy brow, Thou wouldst be lovely, couldst thou love again; For Love renews the Beautiful: but thou Hast only pain.</p> <p>How wilt thou bear from pity to im- plore What once those eyes from rap- ture could command? How wilt thou stretch—who wast a Queen of yore— A suppliant's hand?</p> <p>Even were thy heart content from love to ask No more than needs to keep it from the chill, Hast thou the strength to recom- mence the task Of pardoning still?</p> <p>Wilt thou to one, exacting all that I Have lost the right to ask for, still extend Forgiveness on forgiveness, with that sigh That dreads the end?</p> <p>Ah, if thy heart can pardon yet, why yet Should not its latest pardon be for me? For who will bend, the boon he seeks to get, On lowlier knee?</p> <p>Where wilt thou find the unworthier heart than mine, That it may be more grateful, or more lowly? To whom else, pardoning much, be- come divine By pardoning wholly?</p> <p>Hath not thy forehead paled beneath my kiss? And through thy life have I not writ my name? Hath not my soul signed thine? . . . I gave thee bliss, If I gave shame:</p>	<p>The shame, but not the bliss, wher- e'er thou goest, Will haunt thee yet: to me no shame thou hast: To me alone, what now thou art, thou knowest By what thou wast.</p> <p>What other hand will help thy heart to swell To raptures mine first taught it how to feel? Or from the unchorded harp and va- cant shell New notes reveal?</p> <p>Ah, by my dark and sullen nature nurst, And rocked by passion on this stormy heart, Be mine the last, as thou wert mine the first! We dare not part!</p> <p>At best a fallen Angel to mankind, To me be still the seraph I have dared To show my hell to, and whose love resigned Its pain hath shared.</p> <p>If, faring on together, I have fed Thy lips on poisons, they were sweet at least, Nor couldst thou thrive where hol- lier Love hath spread His simpler feast.</p> <p>Change would be death. Could sev- erance from my side Bring thee repose, I would not bid thee stay. My love should meet, as calmly as my pride, That parting day.</p> <p>It may not be: for thou couldst not forget me,— Not that my own is more than other natures, But that 'tis different: and thou wouldst regret me 'Mid purer creatures.</p>
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Then, if love's first ideal now grows wan,  
 And thou wilt love again, — again  
 love me,  
 For what I am :—no hero, but a man  
 Still loving thee.

## SORCERY.

TO —.

YOU'RE a milk-white Panther :  
 I'm a Genius of the air.  
 You're a Princess once enchanted ;  
 That is why you seem so fair.

For a crime untold, unwritten,  
 That was done an age ago,  
 I have lost my wings, and wander  
 In the wilderness below.

In a dream too long indulged,  
 In a Palace by the sea,  
 You were changed to what you are  
 By a muttered sorcery.

Your name came on my lips  
 When I first looked in your eyes :  
 At my feet you fawned, you knew  
 me  
 In despite of all disguise.

The black elephants of Delhi  
 Are the wisest of their kind,  
 And the libbards of Soumatra  
 Are full of eyes behind :

But they guessed not, they divined  
 not,  
 They believed me of the earth,  
 When I walked among them, mourn-  
 ing  
 For the region of my birth.

Till I found you in the moonlight.  
 Then at once I knew it all.  
 You were sleeping in the sand here,  
 But you wakened to my call.

I knew why, in your slumber,  
 You were moaning piteously :  
 You heard a sound of harping  
 From a Palace by the sea.

Through the wilderness together  
 We must wander everywhere,  
 Till we find the magic berry  
 That shall make us what we were.

'Tis a berry sweet and bitter,  
 I have heard ; there is but one ;  
 On a tall tree, by a fountain,  
 In the desert all alone.

When at last 'tis found and eaten,  
 We shall both be what we were ;  
 You, a Princess of the water,  
 I, a Genius of the air.

See! the Occident is flaring  
 Far behind us in the skies,  
 And our shadows float before us.  
 Night is coming forth. Arise!

ADIEU, MIGNONNE, MA  
 BELLE.

ADIEU, Mignonne, ma belle . . .  
 when you are gone,  
 Vague thoughts of you will wan-  
 der, searching love  
 Through this dim heart: through  
 this dim room, Mignonne,  
 Vague fragrance from your hair  
 and dress will move.

How will you think of this poor  
 heart to-morrow,  
 This poor fond heart with all its  
 joy in you?  
 Which you were fain to lean on,  
 once, in sorrow,  
 Though now you bid it such a  
 light adieu.

You'll sing perchance . . . "I passed  
 a night of dreams  
 Once, in an old inn's old worm  
 eaten bed,  
 Passing on life's highway. How  
 strange it seems,  
 That never more I there shall lean  
 my head!"



Adieu, Mignonne, adieu, Mignonne,  
ma belle!

Ah, little witch, our greeting was  
so gay,

Our love so painless, who'd have  
thought "Farewell"

Could ever be so sad a word to  
say?

I leave a thousand fond farewells  
with you:

Some for your red wet lips, which  
were so sweet:

Some for your darling eyes, so  
dear, so blue

Some for your wicked, wanton  
little feet:

But for your little heart, not yet  
awake,—

What can I leave your little heart,  
Mignonne?

It seems so fast asleep, I fear to  
break

The poor thing's slumber. Let it  
still sleep on!

#### TO MIGNONNE.

At morning, from the sunlight

I shall miss your sunny face,

Leaning, laughing, on my shoulder

With its careless infant grace;

And your hand there,

With its rosy, inside color,

And the sparkle of its rings;

And your soul from this old chamber

Missed in fifty little things,

When I stand there.

And the roses in the garden

Droop stupid all the day,—

Red, thirsty mouths wide open,

With not a word to say!

Their last meaning

Is all faded, like a fragrance,

From the languishing late flowers,

With your feet, your slow white  
movements,

And your face, in silent hours,

O'er them leaning.

And, in long, cool summer evenings,  
I shall never see you, drest

In those pale violet colors

Which suit your sweet face best.

Here's your glove, child,

Soiled and empty, as you left it,

Yet your hand's warmth seems to  
stay

In it still, as though this moment

You had drawn your hand away;

Like your love, child,

Which still stays about my fancy.

See this little, silken boot.—

What a plaything! was there ever

Such a slight and slender foot?

Is it strange now

How that, when your lips are nearest

To the lips they feed upon

For a summer time, till bees sleep,

On a sudden you are gone?

What new change now

Sets you sighing . . . eyes uplifted

To the starry night above?

"God is great . . . the soul's im-  
mortal . . .

Must we die, though! . . . Do  
you love?

One kiss more, then:

"Life might end now!" . . . And  
next moment

With those wicked little feet,

You have vanished,—like a Fairy

From a fountain in the heat,

And all's o'er, then.

Well, no matter! . . . hearts are  
breaking

Every day, but not for you,

Little wanton, ever making

Chains of rose, to break them  
through.

I would mourn you,

But your red smile was too warm,

Sweet,

And your little heart too cold,

And your blue eyes too blue merely.

For a strong, sad man to scold,

Weep, or scorn, you.

For that smile's soft, transient sun-  
shine

At my hearth, when it was chill,  
I shall never do your name wrong,  
But think kindly of you still;  
And each moment

Of your pretty infant angers,  
(Who could help but smile at . . .  
when

Those small feet would stamp our  
love out?)

Why, I pass them now, as then,  
Without comment.

Only, here, when I am searching  
For the book I cannot find,  
I must sometimes pass your boudoir,  
Howsoever disinclined;

And must meet there

The gold bird-cage in the window,  
Where no bird is singing now;  
The small sofa and the footstool,  
Where I miss . . . I know not  
how . . .

Your young feet there,

Silken-soft in each quaint slipper;  
And the jewelled writing-case,  
Where you never more will write  
now;

And the vision of your face,  
Just turned to me:—

I would save this, if I could, child,  
But that's all. . . . September's  
here!

I must write a book: read twenty:  
Learn a language . . . what's to  
fear?

Who grows gloomy

Being free to work, as I am?

Yet these autumn nights are cold.  
How I wonder how you'll pass them!  
Ah, . . . could all be as of old!  
But 'tis best so.

All good things must go for better,  
As the primrose for the rose.

Is love free? why so is life, too!  
Holds the grave fast? . . . I sup-  
pose

Things must rest so.

### COMPENSATION.

WHEN the days are silent all  
Till the drear light falls;  
And the nights pass with the pall  
Of Love's funerals;  
When the heart is weighed with  
years;

And the eyes too weak for tears;  
And life like death appears;

Is it naught, O soul of mine,  
To hear i' the windy track  
A voice with a song divine  
Calling thy footsteps back  
To the land thou lovest best,  
Toward the Garden in the West  
Where thou hast once been blest?

Is it naught, O aching brow,  
To feel in the dark hour,  
Which came, though called, so slow,  
And, though loathed, yet lingers  
slower,

A hand upon thy pain,  
Lovingly laid again,  
Smoothing the ruffled brain?

O love, my own and only!  
The seraphs shall not see  
By my looks that life was lonely;  
But that 'twas blest by thee.

If few lives have been more lone  
Few have more rapture known,  
Than mine and thine, my own!

When the lamp burns dim and dim-  
mer;

And the curtain close is drawn;  
And the twilight seems to glimmer  
With a supernatural dawn;  
And the Genius at the door  
Turns the torch down to the floor,  
Till the world is seen no more;

In the doubt, the dark, the fear,  
'Mid the spirits come to take thee  
Shall mine to thine be near,  
And my kiss the first to wake  
thee.

Meanwhile, in life's December,  
On the wind that strews the ember,  
Shall a voice still moan . . . "Re-  
member!"

TRANSLATIONS FROM PETER  
RONCARD.

" VOICI LE BOIS QUE MA SAINCTE  
ANGELETTE."

HERE is the wood that freshened to  
her song;  
See here, the flowers that keep her  
footprints yet;  
Where, all alone, my saintly  
Angelette  
Went wandering, with her maiden  
thoughts, along.

Here is the little rivulet where she  
stopped;  
And here the greenness of the  
grass shows where  
She lingered through it, searching  
here and there  
Those daisies dear, which in her  
breast she dropped.

Here did she sing, and here she  
wept, and here  
Her smile came back; and here I  
seem to hear  
Those faint half-words with which  
my thoughts are rife;  
Here did she sit; here, childlike,  
did she dance,  
To some vague impulse of her own  
romance —  
Ah, Love, on all these thoughts,  
winds out my life!

" CACHE POUR CETTE NUICT."

HIDE, for a night, thy horn, good  
Moon! Fair Fortune  
For this shall keep Endymion ever  
prest  
Deep-dreaming, amorous, on thine  
argent breast,  
Nor ever shall enchanter thee im-  
portune.

Hateful to me the day; most sweet  
the night!  
I fear the myriad meddling eyes  
of day;

But courage comes with night.  
Close, close, I pray,  
Your curtains, dear dark skies, on  
my delight!

Thou too, thou Moon, thou too hast  
felt love's power!  
Pan, with a white fleece, won thee  
for an hour;  
And you, sidereal Signs in yonder  
blue,

Favor the fire to which my heart is  
moved.  
Forget not, Signs, the greater part  
of you  
Was only set in heaven for having  
loved!

" PAGE, SUY MOY."

FOLLOW, my Page, where the green  
grass embosoms  
The enamelled Season's freshest-  
fallen dew;  
Then home, and my still house  
with handfuls strew  
Of frail-lived April's newliest nur-  
tured blossoms.

Take from the wall now, my song-  
tuned Lyre;  
Here will I sit and charm out the  
sweet pain  
Of a dark eye whose light hath  
burned my brain,  
The unloving loveliness of my desire!

And here my ink, and here my  
papers, place: —  
A hundred leaves of white, whereon  
to trace  
A hundred words of desultory  
woe —  
Words which shall last, like graven  
diamonds, sure; —  
That, some day hence, a future  
race may know  
And ponder on the pain which I  
endure.

"LES ESPICES SONT A CERES."

CERES hath her harvest sweet:

Chlora's is the young green grass:  
Woods for Fauns with cloven feet:

His green laurel Phœbus has:  
Minerva has her Olive-tree:  
And the Pine's for Cybele.

Sweetsounds are for Zephyr's wings:

Sweet fruit for Pomona's bosom:  
For the Nymphs are crystal springs  
And for Flora bud and blossom:  
But sighs and tears, and sad ideas,  
These alone are Cytherea's.

"MA DOUCE JOUVENCE."

MY sweet youth now all is done;  
The strength and the beauty are  
gone.

The tooth now is black, and the  
head now is white,  
And the nerves now are loosed: in  
the veins

Only water (not blood now) remains,  
Where the pulse beat of old with  
delight.

Adieu, O my lyre, O adieu,  
You sweet women, my lost loves,  
and you

Each dead passion! . . . The end  
creepeth nigher.

Not one pastime of youth has kept  
pace

With my age. Naught remains in  
their place

But the bed, and the cup, and the  
fire.

My head is confused with low fears,  
And sickness, and too many years,

Some care in each corner I meet—  
And, wherever I linger or go,

I turn back, and look after, to know  
If the Death be still dogging my  
feet:—

Dogging me down the dark stair,  
Which windeth, I cannot tell where,

To some Pluto that opens forever  
His cave to all comers—Alas!

How easily down it all pass,  
And return from it—never, ah,  
never!

## BOOK III.—IN ENGLAND.

### THE ALOE.

A STRANGER sent from burning  
lands,

In realms where buzz and mutter  
yet

Old gods, with hundred heads and  
hands,

On jewelled thrones of jet,—

(Old gods as old as Time itself,)

And, in a hot and level calm,

Recline o'er many a sandy shelf

Dusk forms beneath the palm,—

To Lady Eve, who dwells beside

The river-meads, and oak-trees  
tall,

Whose dewy shades encircle wide—  
Her old Baronial Hall,

An Indian plant with leaves like  
horn,

And, all along its stubborn spine  
Mere humps, with angry spike and  
thorn

Armed like the porcupine.

In midst of which one sullen bud  
Surveyed the world, with head  
aslant,

High-throned, and looking like the  
god

Of this strange Indian plant.

A stubborn plant, from looking cross  
 It seemed no kindness could re-  
 trieve!  
 But for his sake whose gift it was  
 It pleased the Lady Eve.

She set it on the terraced walk,  
 Within her own fair garden-  
 ground;  
 And every morn and eve its stalk  
 Was duly watered round.

And every eve and morn, the while  
 She tended this uncourteous thing,  
 I stood beside her, — watched her  
 smile,  
 And often heard her sing.

The roses I at times would twist  
 To deck her hair, she oft forgot;  
 But never that dark aloe missed  
 The daily watering-pot.

She seemed so gay, — I felt so sad, —  
 Her laugh but made me frown the  
 more:  
 For each light word of hers I had  
 Some sharp reply in store.

Until she laughed . . . "This aloe  
 shows  
 A kindlier nature than your  
 own" . . .

Ah, Eve, you little dreamed what  
 foes  
 The plant and I had grown!

At last, one summer night, when all  
 The garden flowers were dreaming  
 still,  
 And still the old Baronial Hall,  
 The oak-trees on the hill,

A loud and sudden sound there  
 stirred,  
 As when a thunder-cloud is torn;  
 Such thunder-claps are only heard  
 When little gods are born.

The echo went from place to place,  
 And wakened every early sleeper.  
 Some said that poachers in the chase  
 Had slain a buck — or keeper.

Some hinted burglars at the door:  
 Some questioned if it had not  
 lightened:  
 While all the maids, as each one  
 swore,  
 From their seven wits were fright-  
 ened.

The peacocks screamed, and every  
 rook  
 Upon the elms at roost did caw:  
 Each inmate straight the house for-  
 sook:  
 They searched — and, last, — they  
 saw

That sullen bud to flower had burst  
 Upon the sharp-leaved aloe  
 there; —  
 A wondrous flower, whose breath  
 disperst  
 Rich odors on the air.

A flower, colossal — dazzling white,  
 And fair as is a Sphinx's face,  
 Turned broadly to the moon by night  
 From some vast temple's base.

Yes, Eve! your aloe paid the pains  
 With which its sullen growth you  
 nurst.

But ah! my nature yet remains  
 As churlish as at first.

And yet, and yet — it might have  
 proved  
 Not all unworth your heart's ap-  
 proving.

Ah, had I only been beloved, —  
 (Beloved as I was loving!)

I might have been . . . how much,  
 how much,  
 I am not now, and shall not be!  
 One gentle look, one tender touch,  
 Had done so much for me!

I too, perchance, if kindly tended,  
 Had roused the napping genera-  
 tion,  
 With something novel, strange, and  
 splendid,  
 Deserving admiration:

For all the while there grew, and  
 grew  
 A germ,—a bud, within my bos-  
 som:  
 No flower, fair Eve! — for, thanks  
 to you,  
 It never came to blossom.

“MEDIO DE FONTE LEPO-  
 RUM SURGIT AMARI ALI-  
 QUID.”

LUCRETIVS.

WE walked about at Hampton  
 Court,  
 Alone in sunny weather,  
 And talked — half earnest, and half  
 sport,  
 Linked arm in arm together.

I pressed her hand upon the steps.  
 Its warmest light the sky lent.  
 She sought the shade: I sought her  
 lips:  
 We kissed: and then were silent.

Clare thought, no doubt, of many  
 things,  
 Besides the kiss I stole there; —  
 The sun, in sunny founts in rings,  
 The bliss of soul with soul there,

The bonnet, fresh from Frauce she  
 wore,  
 My praise of how she wore it,  
 The arms above the carven door,  
 The orange-trees before it; —

But I could only think, as, mute  
 I watched her happy smile there,  
 With rising pain, of this curst boot,  
 That pinched me all the while  
 there.

#### THE DEATH OF KING HAACON.

It was Odin that whispered in Vin-  
 golf,  
 “Go forth to the heath by the  
 sea;  
 Find Haacón before the moon rises,  
 And bid him to supper with me.”

They go forth to choose from the  
 Princes  
 Of Yngvon, and summons from  
 fight  
 A man who must perish in battle,  
 And sup where the gods sup to-  
 night.

Leaning over her brazen spear, Gon-  
 dula  
 Thus bespoke her companions,  
 “The feast  
 Of the gods shall, in Vingolf, this  
 evening,  
 O ye Daughters of War, be in-  
 creast.

“For Odin hath beckoned unto me,  
 For Odin hath whispered me forth,  
 To bid to his supper King Haacón  
 With the half of the hosts of the  
 North.”

Their horses gleamed white through  
 the vapor:  
 In the moonlight their corselets  
 did shine:  
 As they wavered and whispered to-  
 gether,  
 And fashioned their solemn de-  
 sign.

Haacón heard them discoursing —  
 “Why hast thou  
 Thus disposed of the battle so  
 soon?  
 O, were we not worthy of conquest?  
 Lo! we die by the rise of the  
 moon.”

“It is not the moon that is rising,  
 But the glory which penetrates  
 death,  
 When heroes to Odin are summoned.  
 Rise, Haacón, and stand on the  
 heath!

“It is we,” she replied, “that have  
 given  
 To thy pasture the flower of the  
 fight,  
 It is we, it is we that have scattered  
 Thine enemies yonder in flight.”

Come now, let us push on our  
horses  
Over yonder green worlds in the  
east,  
Where the great gods are gathered  
together,  
And the tables are piled for the  
feast.

“Betimes to give notice to Odin,  
Who waits in his sovran abodes,  
That the King to his palace is com-  
ing  
This evening to visit the gods.”

Odin rose when he heard it, and  
with him  
Rose the gods, every god to his  
feet.  
He beckoned Hermoder and Brago,  
They came to him, each from his  
seat.

“Go forth, O my sons, to King Ha-  
con,  
And meet him and greet him from  
all,  
A King that we know by his valor  
Is coming to-night to our hall.”

Then faintly King Hacon ap-  
proaches,  
Arriving from battle, and sore  
With the wounds that yet bleed  
through his armor  
Bedabbled and dripping with gore.

His visage is pallid and awful  
With the awe and the pallor of  
death,  
Like the moon that at midnight arises  
Where the battle lies strewn on  
the heath.

To him spake Hermoder and Brago,  
“We meet thee and greet thee  
from all,  
To the gods thou art known by thy  
valor,  
And they bid thee a guest to their  
hall.

“Come hither, come hither, King  
Hacon,  
And join those eight brothers of  
thine,  
Who already, awaiting thy coming,  
With the gods in Walhala recline.

“And loosen, O Hacon, thy corselet,  
For thy wounds are yet ghastly to  
see.  
Go pour ale in the circle of heroes,  
And drink, for the gods drink to  
thee.”

But he answered, the hero, “I never  
Will part with the armor I wear.  
Shall a warrior stand before Odin  
Unshamed, without helmet and  
spear?”

Black Fenris, the wolf, the destroyer,  
Shall arise and break loose from  
his chain  
Before that a hero like Hacon  
Shall stand in the battle again.

“CARPE DIEM.”

HORACE

TO-MORROW is a day too far  
To trust, whate'er the day be.  
We know, a little, what we are,  
But who knows what he may be?

The oak that on the mountain grows  
A goodly ship may be,  
Next year; but it as well (who  
knows?)  
May be a gallows-tree.

'Tis God made man, no doubt, — no  
Chance:  
He made us, great and small;  
But, being made, 'tis Circumstance  
That finishes us all.

The Author of this world's great plan  
The same results will draw  
From human life, however man  
May keep, or break, His law.

The Artist to his Art doth look ;  
 And Art's great laws exact  
 That those portrayed in Nature's  
 Book,  
 Should freely move and act.

The moral of the work unchanged  
 Endures eternally,  
 Howe'er by human wills arranged  
 The work's details may be.

"Give us this day our daily bread,  
 The morrow shall take heed  
 Unto itself." The Master said  
 No more. No more we need.

To-morrow cannot make or mar  
 To-day, whate'er the day be :  
 Nor can the men which now we are  
 Forsee the men we may be.

#### THE FOUNT OF TRUTH.

It was the place by legends told.  
 I read the tale when yet a child.  
 The castle on the mountain hold,  
 The woodland in the wild.

The wrecks of unremembered days  
 Were heaped around. It was the  
 hour  
 When bold men fear, and timorous  
 fays  
 Grow bold, and know their power.

The month was in the downward  
 year.  
 The breath of Autumn chilled the  
 sky :  
 And useless leaves, too early sere,  
 Muttered and eddied by.

It seemed that I was wending back  
 Among the ruins of my youth,  
 Along a wild night-haunted track  
 To seek the Fount of Truth.

The Fount of Truth, — that won-  
 drous fount !  
 Its solemn sound I seem to hear  
 Wind-borne adown the clouded  
 mount,  
 Desolate, cold, and clear.

By clews long lost, and found again  
 I know not how, my course was  
 led  
 Through lands remote from living  
 men,  
 As life is from the dead.

Yet up that wild road, here and  
 there,  
 Large awful footprints did I meet :  
 Footprints of gods perchance they  
 were,  
 Prints — not of human feet.

The mandrake underneath my foot  
 Gave forth a shriek of angry pain.  
 I heard the roar of some wild brute  
 Prowling the windy plain.

I reached the gate. I blew with  
 power  
 A blast upon the darkness wide.  
 "Who art thou?" from the gloomy  
 tower  
 The sullen warder cried.

"A Pilgrim to the Fount of Truth."  
 He laughed a laugh of scornful  
 spleen.  
 "Art thou not from the Land of  
 Youth?  
 Report where thou hast been."

"The Land of Youth! an alien  
 race  
 There, in my old dominions,  
 reign;  
 And, with them, one on whose false  
 face  
 I will not gaze again.

"From to and fro the world I come,  
 Where I have fared as exiles fare,  
 Mocked by the memories of home  
 And homeless everywhere.

"The snake that slid through  
 Paradise  
 Yet on my pathway slides and  
 slips :  
 The apple plucked in Eden twice  
 Is yet upon my lips.



"I can report the wor'd is still  
Where it hath been since it began:  
And Wisdom, with bewildered will,  
Is still the same sick man,

"Whom yet the self-same visions  
fool,  
The self-same nightmares haunt  
and scare.

Folly still breeds the Public Fool,  
Knowledge increaseth care:

"Joy hath his tears, and Grief her  
smile;  
And still both tears and smiles  
deceive.

And in the Valley of the Nile  
I hear — and I believe —

"The Fiend and Michael, as of  
yore,  
Yet wage the ancient war: but  
how

This strife will end at last, is more  
Than our new sages know."

I heard the gate behind me close.

It closed with a reluctant wail.

Roused by the sound from her re-  
pose

Started the Porteress pale:

In pity, or in scorn . . . "Forbear,  
Madam," she cried, . . . "thy  
search for Truth.

The curl is in thy careless hair.

Return to Love and Youth.

"What lured thee here, through  
dark, and doubt,

The many-perilled prize to  
win?" —

"The dearth" . . . I said . . . "of  
all without,

The thirst of all within.

"Age comes not with the wrinkled  
brow

But earlier, with the ravaged heart;

Full oft hath fallen the winter snow  
Since Love from me did part.

"Long in dry places, void of cheer,  
Long have I roamed. These  
features scan:

If magic lore be thine, look here,  
Behold the Talisman!"

I crossed the court. The blood-  
hound bayed

Behind me from the outer wall.

The drowsy grooms my call obeyed  
And lit the haunted hall.

They brought me horse, and lance,  
and helm,

They bound the buckler on my  
breast,

Spread the weird chart of that wild  
realm,

And armed me for the quest.

Uprose the Giant of the Keep.

"Rash fool, ride on!" . . . I  
heard him say,

"The night is late, the heights are  
steep,

And Truth is far away!"

And . . . "Far away!" . . . the  
echoes fell

Behind as from that grisly hold

I turned. No tongue of man may  
tell

What mine must leave untold.

The Fount of Truth, — that won-  
drous fount!

Far off I heard its waters play.

But ere I scaled the solemn mount,  
Dawn broke. The trivial day

To its accustomed course flowed  
back,

And all the glamour faded round.

Is it forever lost, — that track?

Or — was it never found?

#### MIDGES.

SUE is talking æsthetics, the dear  
clever creature!

Upon Man, and his functions  
she speaks with a smile.

Her ideas are divine upon Art, upon  
Nature,  
The sublime, the Heroic, and Mr.  
Carlyle.

I no more am found worthy to join  
in the talk, now;  
So I follow with my surreptitious  
cigar;

While she leads our poetical friend  
up the walk, now,  
Who quotes Wordsworth and  
praises her "*Thoughts on a  
Star.*"

Meanwhile, there is dancing in  
yonder green bower  
A swarm of young midges. They  
dance high and low.

'Tis a sweet little species that lives  
but one hour,  
And the eldest was born half an  
hour ago.

One impulsive young midge I hear  
ardently pouring  
In the ears of a shy little wanton  
in gauze, [adoring:  
His eternal devotion; his ceaseless  
Which shall last till the Universe  
breaks from its laws:

His passion is not, he declares, the  
mere fever  
Of a rapturous moment. It knows  
no control:

It will burn in his breast through  
existence forever,  
Immutably fixed in the deeps of  
the soul!

She wavers: she flutters: . . . male  
midges are fickle:  
Dare she trust him her future?  
. . . she asks with a sigh:

He implores, . . . and a tear is be-  
ginning to trickle:  
She is weak: they embrace, and  
. . . the lovers pass by.

While they pass me, down here on  
a rose leaf has lighted  
A pale midge, his feelers all  
drooping and torn:

His existence is withered; its future  
is blighted:  
His hopes are betrayed: and his  
breast is forlorn.

By the midge his heart trusted his  
heart is deceived, now,  
In the virtue of midges no more  
he believes:

From love in its falsehood, once  
wildly believed, now  
He will bury his desolate life in  
the leaves.

His friends would console him . . .  
the noblest and sagest  
Of midges have held that a midge  
lives again.

In Eternity, they say, the strife thou  
now wagest  
With sorrow shall cease . . . but  
their words are in vain!

Can Eternity bring back the sec-  
onds now wasted  
In hopeless desire? or restore to  
his breast

The belief he has lost, with the bliss  
he once tasted,  
Embracing the midge that his  
being loved best?

His friends would console him . . .  
life yet is before him;  
Many hundred long seconds he  
still has to live:

In the state yet a mighty career  
spreads before him:  
Let him seek in the great world  
of action to strive!

There is Fame! there's Ambition!  
and, grander than either,  
There is Freedom! . . . the prog-  
ress and march of the  
race! . . .

But to Freedom his breast beats no  
longer, and neither  
Ambition nor action her loss can  
replace.

<p>If the time had been spent in acquiring æsthetics  I have squandered in learning this language of midges,  There might, for my friend in her peripatetics,  Have been now <i>two</i> asses to help o'er the bridges.</p> <p>As it is, . . . I'll report her the whole conversation.  It would have been longer; but, somehow or other  (In the midst of that misanthrope's long lamentation),  A midge in my right eye became a young mother.</p> <p>Since my friend is so clever, I'll ask her to tell me  Why the least living thing (a mere midge in the egg!)  Can make a man's tears flow, as now it befell me . . .  O you dear clever woman, explain it, I beg!</p> <p>THE LAST TIME THAT I MET  LADY RUTH.</p> <p>THERE are some things hard to understand.  O help me, my God, to trust in thee!  But I never shall forget her soft white hand,  And her eyes when she looked at me.</p> <p>It is hard to pray the very same prayer  Which once at our mother's knee we prayed —  When, where we trusted our whole heart, there  Our trust hath been betrayed.</p> <p>I swear that the milk-white muslin so light  On her virgin breast, where it lay demure,</p>	<p>Seemed to be toucht to a purer white  By the touch of a breast so pure.</p> <p>I deemed her the one thing undefiled  By the air we breathe, in a world of sin:  The truest, the tenderest, purest child  A man ever trusted in!</p> <p>When she blamed me (she, with her fair child's face!)  That never with her to the Church I went  To partake of the Gospel of truth and grace,  And the Christian sacrament,</p> <p>And I said I would go for her own sweet sake,  Though it was but herself I should worship there,  How that happy child's face strove to take  On its dimples a serious air!</p> <p>I remember the chair she would set for me,  By the flowers when all the house was gone  To drive in the Park, and I and she  Were left to be happy alone.</p> <p>There she leaned her head on my knees, my Ruth,  With the primrose loose in her half-closed hands:  And I told her tales of my wandering youth  In the far fair foreign lands. —</p> <p>The last time I met her was here in town,  At a fancy ball at the Duchess of D.,  On the stairs, where her husband was handing her down.  — There we met, and she talked to me.</p>
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She, with powder in hair, and patch  
 on chin,  
 And I, in the garb of a pilgrim  
 Priest,  
 And between us both, without and  
 within,  
 A hundred years at least!  
 We talked of the House, and the late  
 long rains,  
 And the crush at the French Am-  
 bassador's ball,  
 And . . . well, I have not blown out  
 my brains.  
 You see I can laugh. That is all.

#### MATRIMONIAL COUNSELS.

You are going to marry my pretty  
 relation,  
 My dove-like young cousin, so soft  
 in the eyes,  
 You are entering on life's settled  
 dissimulation,  
 And, if you'd be happy, in season  
 be wise.  
 Take my counsel. The more that,  
 in church, you are tempted  
 To yawn at the sermon, the more  
 you'll attend.  
 The more you'd from milliner's bills  
 be exempted,  
 The more on your wife's little  
 wishes you'll spend.  
 You'll be sure, every Christmas, to  
 send to the rector  
 A dozen of wine, and a hamper or  
 two.  
 The more your wife plagues you,  
 the more you'll respect her,  
 She'll be pleasing your friend, if  
 she's not plaguing you.  
 For women of course, like our-  
 selves, need emotion;  
 And happy the husband, whose  
 failings afford  
 To the wife of his heart, such good  
 cause for commotion  
 That she seeks no excitement,  
 save plaguing her lord.

Above all, you'll be careful that  
 nothing offends, too,  
 Your wife's lady maid, though  
 she give herself airs.  
 With the friend of a friend it is well  
 to be friends too,  
 And especially so, when that  
 friend lives up stairs.  
 Under no provocation you'll ever  
 avow yourself  
 A little put out, when you're kept  
 at the door,  
 And you never, I scarcely need say,  
 will allow yourself  
 To call your wife's mother a vul-  
 gar old bore.  
 However she dresses, you'll never  
 suggest to her  
 That her taste, as to colors, could  
 scarcely be worse,  
 Of the rooms in your house, you will  
 give up the best to her,  
 And you never will ask for the  
 carriage, of course.  
 If, at times with a doubt on the soul  
 and her future,  
 Revelation and reason, existence  
 should trouble you,  
 You'll be always on guard to keep  
 carefully mute your  
 Ideas on the subject, and read  
 Dr. W.  
 Bring a shawl with you, home, when  
 you come from the club, sir,  
 Or a ring, lest your wife, when  
 you meet her, should pout;  
 And don't fly in a rage and behave  
 like a cub, sir,  
 If you find that the fire, like your-  
 self, has gone out.  
 In eleven good instances out of a  
 dozen,  
 'Tis the husband's a cur, when the  
 wife is a cat.  
 She is meekness itself, my soft-eyed  
 little cousin,  
 But a wife has her rights, and I'd  
 have you know that.

Keep my counsel. Life's struggles  
are brief to be borne, friend.

In Heaven there's no marriage nor  
giving in marriage.

When Death comes, think how  
truly your widow will mourn,  
friend,

And your worth not the best of  
your friends will disparage!

## SEE-SAW.

SHE was a harlot, and I was a thief:  
But we loved each other beyond  
belief:

She lived in the garret, and I in the  
kitchen,

And love was all that we both were  
rich in.

When they sent her at last to the  
hospital,

Both day and night my tears did fall;  
They fell so fast that, to dry their  
grief,

I borrowed my neighbor's handker-  
chief.

The world, which, as it is brutally  
taught,

Still judges the act in lieu of the  
thought,

Found my hand in my neighbor's  
pocket,

And clapped me, at once, under chain  
and locket.

When they asked me about it, I told  
them plain,

Love it was that had turned my  
brain:

How should I heed where my hand  
had been,

When my heart was dreaming of  
Celestine?

Twelve friends were so struck by  
my woful air,

That they sent me abroad for change  
of air:

And, to prove me the kindness of  
their intent,

They sent me at charge of the Gov-  
ernment.

When I came back again, — whom,  
think you, I meet

But Celestine, here, in Regent  
Street?

In a carriage adorned with a coronet,  
And a dress, all flounces, and lace,  
and jet:

For her carriage drew up to the  
bookseller's door,

Where they publish those nice little  
books for the poor:

I took off my hat: and my face she  
knew,

And gave me — a sermon by Mr.  
Bellew.

But she gave me (God bless her!)  
along with the book,

Such a sweet sort of smile, such a  
heavenly look,

That, as long as I live, I shall never  
forget

Celestine, in her coach with the  
earl's coronet.

There's a game that men play at in  
great London-town;

Whereby some must go up, sir, and  
some must go down:

And, since the mud sticks to your  
coat if you fall,

Why, the strongest among us keep  
close to the wall.

But some day, soon or late, in my  
shoes I shall stand,

More exalted than any great Duke  
in the land;

A clean shirt on my back, and a  
rose in my coat,

And a collar conferred by the Queen  
round my throat.

And I know that my Celestine will  
not forget

To be there, in her coach with my  
lord's coronet:

She will smile to me then, as she  
smiled to me now:  
I shall nod to her gayly, and make  
her my bow;—

Before I rejoin all those famous old  
thieves  
Whose deeds have immortalized  
Rome, sir, and Greece:  
Whose names are inscribed upon  
History's leaves,  
Like my own on the books of the  
City Police:—

Alexander, and Cæsar, and other  
great robbers,  
Who once tried to pocket the whole  
universe:  
Not to speak of our own parliament-  
ary jobbers,  
With their hands, bless them all, in  
the popular purse!

#### BABYLONIA.

ENOUGH of simpering and grimace!  
Enough of damning one's soul  
for nothing!  
Enough of Vacuity trimmed with  
lace!  
And Poverty proud of her purple  
clothing!  
In Babylon, whene'er there's a wind  
(Whether it blow rain, or whether  
it blow sand),  
The weathercocks change their  
mighty mind;  
And the weathercocks are forty  
thousand.  
Forty thousand weatherecks,  
Each well-minded to keep his  
place,  
Turning about in the great and  
small ways!  
Each knows, whatever the weather's  
shocks,  
That the wind will never blow in  
his face;  
And in Babylon the wind blows  
always.

I cannot tell how it may strike you,  
But it strikes me now, for the first  
and last time,  
That there may be better things to do,  
Than watching the weathercocks  
for pastime.  
And I wish I were out of Babylon,  
Out of sight of column and steeple,  
Out of fashion and form, for one,  
And out of the midst of this  
double-faced people.  
Enough of catgut! Enough of the  
sight  
Of the dolls it sets dancing all the  
night!  
For there is a notion come to me,  
As here, in Babylon, I am lying,  
That far away, over the sea,  
And under another moon and  
star,  
Braver, more beautiful beings are  
dying  
(Dying, not dancing, dying, dying!)  
To a music nobler far.

Full well I know that, before it came  
To inhabit this feeble, faltering  
frame,  
My soul was weary; and, ever  
since then,  
It has seemed to me, in the stir  
and bustle [men,  
Of this eager world of women and  
That my life was tired before it  
began,  
That even the child had fatigued the  
man,  
And brain and heart have done  
their part  
To wear out sinew and muscle.  
Yet, sometimes, a wish has come to  
me,  
To wander, wander, I know not  
where,  
Out of the sight of all that I see,  
Out of the hearing of all that I  
hear;  
Where only the tawny, bold, wild  
beast  
Roams his realms; and find, at leas't,

The strength which even the beast  
 finds there,  
 A joy, though but a savage joy; —  
 Were it only to find the food I  
 need,  
 The scent to track, and the force to  
 destroy,  
 And the very appetite to feed;  
 The bliss of the sense without the  
 thought,  
 And the freedom, for once in my  
 life, from aught  
 That fills my life with care.  
 And never this thought hath so  
 wildly crost  
 My mind, with its wildering,  
 strange temptation,  
 As just when I was enjoying the  
 most  
 The blessings of what is called  
 Civilization: —  
 The glossy boot which tightens the  
 foot;  
 The club at which my friend was  
 black-balled  
 (I am sorry, of course, but one  
 must be exclusive);  
 The yellow kid glove whose shape I  
 approve,  
 And the journal in which I am  
 kindly called  
 Whatever's not libellous — only  
 abusive:  
 The ball to which I am careful to go,  
 Where the folks are so cool, and  
 the rooms are so hot;  
 The opera, which shows one  
 what music — is not;  
 And the simper from Lady . . . but  
 why should you know?  
 Yet, I am a part of the things I de-  
 spise,  
 Since my life is bound by their  
 common span:  
 And each idler I meet, in square  
 or in street,  
 Hath within him what all that's  
 without him belies, —  
 The miraculous, infinite heart of  
 man,  
 With its countless capabilities!  
 The sleekest guest at the general  
 feast,  
 That at every sip, as he sups, says  
 grace,  
 Hath in him a touch of the untamed  
 beast;  
 And change of nature is change  
 of place.  
 The judge on the bench, and the  
 scamp at the dock,  
 Have, in each of them, much that  
 is common to both;  
 Each is part of the parent stock,  
 And their difference comes of their  
 different cloth.  
 'Twixt the Seven Dials and Exeter  
 Hall  
 The gulf that is fixed is not so  
 wide:  
 And the fool that, last year, at Her  
 Majesty's Ball,  
 Sickened me so with his simper of  
 pride,  
 Is the hero now heard of, the first  
 on the wall,  
 With the bayonet-wound in his  
 side.  
 O, for the times which were (if any  
 Time be heroic) heroic indeed!  
 When the men were few,  
 And the deeds to do  
 Were mighty, and many,  
 And each man in his hand held  
 a noble deed.  
 Now the deeds are few,  
 And the men are many,  
 And each man has, at most, but  
 a noble need.  
 Blind fool! . . . I know that all acted  
 time  
 By that which succeeds it, is ever  
 received  
 As calmer, completer, and more  
 sublime,  
 Only because it is finished: be-  
 cause  
 We only behold the thing it  
 achieved;

We behold not the thing that it  
 was.  
 For, while it stands whole and im-  
 mutable,  
 In the marble of memory — we,  
 who have seen  
 But the statue before us, — how can  
 we tell  
 What the men that have hewn at  
 the block may have been?  
 Their passion is merged in its pas-  
 sionlessness;  
 Their strife in its stillness closed  
 forever:  
 Their change upon change in its  
 changelessness;  
 In its final achievement, their fe-  
 verish endeavor:  
 Who knows how sculptor on sculp-  
 tor starved  
 With the thought in the head by the  
 hand uncarved?  
 And he that spread out in its ample  
 repose [brow,  
 That grand, indifferent, godlike  
 How vainly his own may have ached,  
 who knows,  
 'Twixt the laurel above and the  
 wrinkle below?  
 So again to Babylon I come back,  
 Where this fettered giant of Hu-  
 man Nature  
 Cramped in limb, and constrained  
 in stature,  
 In the torture-chamber of Van-  
 ity lies;  
 Helpless and weak, and compelled  
 to speak  
 The things he must despise.  
 You stars, so still in the midnight  
 blue,  
 Which over these huddling roofs I  
 view,  
 Out of reach of this Babylonian  
 riot, —  
 We so restless, and you so quiet,  
 What is difference 'twixt us and you?  
 You each may have pined with a  
 pain divine,  
 For aught I know,

As wildly as this weak heart of mine,  
 In an Age ago:  
 For whence should you have that  
 stern repose,  
 Which, here, dwells but on the  
 brows of those  
 Who have lived, and survived life's  
 fever,  
 Had you never known the ravage  
 and fire  
 Of that inexpressible Desire,  
 Which wastes and calcines whatever  
 is less  
 In the soul, than the soul's deep  
 consciousness  
 Of a life that shall last forever?  
 Doubtless, doubtless, again and  
 again,  
 Many a mouth has starved for  
 bread  
 In a city whose wharves are  
 choked with corn,  
 And many a heart hath perished  
 dead  
 From being too utterly forlorn,  
 In a city whose streets are choked  
 with men.  
 Yet the bread is there, could one find  
 it out:  
 And there is a heart for a heart, no  
 doubt,  
 Wherever a human heart may  
 beat;  
 And room for courage, and truth,  
 and love,  
 To move, wherever a man may move,  
 In the thickest crowded street.  
 O Lord of the soul of man, whose  
 will  
 Made earth for man, and man for  
 heaven,  
 Help all thy creatures to fulfil  
 The hopes to each one given!  
 So fair thou madest, and so complete,  
 The little daisies at our feet;  
 So sound, and so robust in heart,  
 The patient beasts, that bear their  
 part  
 In this world's labor, never asking  
 The reason of its ceaseless tasking;



Hast thou made man, though more  
in kind,

By reason of his soul and mind,  
Yet less in unison with life,  
By reason of an inward strife,  
Than these, thy simpler creatures, are,  
Submitted to his use and care?

For these, indeed, appear to live  
To the full verge of their own  
power,

Nor ever need that time should give  
To life one space beyond the hour.  
They do not pine for what is not;  
Nor quarrel with the things which  
are;

Their yesterdays are all forgot;  
Their morrows are not feared  
from far:

They do not weep, and wail, and  
moan,

For what is past, or what's to be,  
Or what's not yet, and may be  
never;

They do not their own lives disown,  
Nor haggle with eternity  
For some unknown Forever.

Ah yet, — in this must I believe  
That man is nobler than the rest: —  
That, looking in on his own breast,  
He measures thus his strength  
and size

With supernatural destinies,  
Whose shades o'er all his  
being fall;

And, in that dread comparison  
'Twixt what is deemed and  
what is done,

He can, at intervals, perceive  
How weak he is, and small.

Therefore, he knows himself a child,  
Set in this rudimental star,

To learn the alphabet of Being;  
By straws dismayed, by toys beguiled,  
Yet conscious of a home afar;

With all these things here but  
ill agreeing,  
Because he trusts, in manhood's  
prime,

To walk in some celestial clime;  
Sit in his Father's house; and be  
The inmate of Eternity.

## BOOK IV. — IN SWITZERLAND.

### THE HEART AND NATURE.

THE lake is calm; and, calm, the  
skies

In yonder silent sunset glow,  
Where, o'er the woodland, home-  
ward flies

The solitary crow;

The woodman to his hut is gone;  
The wood-dove in the elm is still;  
The last sheep drinks, and wanders  
on

To graze at will.

Nor aught the pensive prospect  
breaks, [grass,  
Save where my slow feet stir the

Or where the trout to diamonds  
breaks  
The lake's pale glass.

No moan the cushat makes, to heave  
A leaflet round her windless nest;  
The air is silent in the eve;  
The world's at rest.

All bright below; all calm above;  
No sense of pain, no sign of wrong  
Save in thy heart of hopeless love.  
Poor child of Song!

Why must the soul through Nature  
rove,  
At variance with her general plan?

A stranger to the Power, whose love  
Soothes all save Man?

Why lack the strength of meaner  
creatures?

The wandering sheep, the grazing  
kine,  
Are surer of their simple natures  
Than I of mine.

For all their wants the poorest land  
Affords supply; they browse and  
breed;

I scarce divine, and ne'er have found,  
What most I need.

O God, that in this human heart  
Hath made Belief so hard to grow,  
And set the doubt, the pang, the  
smart  
In all we know —

Why hast thou, too, in solemn jest  
At this tormented thinking-power,  
Inscribed, in flame on yonder West,  
In hues on every flower,

Through all the vast unthinking  
sphere  
Of mere material Force without,  
Rebuke so vehement and severe  
To the least doubt?

And robbed the world and hung the  
night,  
With silent, stern, and solemn  
forms;  
And strown with sounds of awe and  
might,  
The seas and storms, —

All lacking power to impart  
To man the secret he assails,  
But armed to crush him, if his heart  
Once doubts or fails!

To make him feel the same forlorn  
Despair the Fiend hath felt ere  
now,  
In gazing at the stern sweet scorn  
On Michael's brow.

### A QUIET MOMENT.

STAY with me, Lady, while you  
may!

For life's so sad, — this hour's so  
sweet;

Ah, Lady, — life too long will stay;  
Too soon this hour will fleet.

How fair this mountain's purple  
bust,

Alone in high and glimmering air!  
And see, . . . those village spires,  
upthrust

From yon dark plain, — how fair!

How sweet yon lone and lovely scene,  
And yonder dropping fiery ball,  
And eve's sweet spirit, that steals,  
unseen,

With darkness over all!

This blessed hour is yours, and  
eve's;

And this is why it seems so sweet  
To lie, as husht as fallen leaves  
In autumn, at your feet;

And watch, awhile released from  
care,

The twilight in yon quiet skies,  
The twilight in your quiet hair,  
The twilight in your eyes:

Till in my soul the twilight stays,  
—Eve's twilight, since the dawn's  
is o'er!

And life's too well-known worthless  
days  
Become unknown once more.

Your face is no uncommon face;  
Like it, I have seen many a one,  
And may again, before my race  
Of care be wholly run.

But not the less, those earnest  
brows,  
And that pure oval cheek can  
charm; —

Those eyes of tender deep repose;  
That breast, the heart keeps warm

Because a sense of goodness sleeps  
 In every sober, soft, brown tress,  
 That o'er these brows, uncared for,  
 keeps

Its shadowy quietness :

Because that lip's soft silence shows,  
 Though passion it hath never  
 known,

That well, to kiss one kiss, it  
 knows —

— A woman's holiest one !

Yours is the charm of calm good  
 sense,

Of wholesome views of earth and  
 heaven,

Of pity, touched with reverence,  
 To all things freely given.

Your face no sleepless midnight fills,  
 For all its serious sweet endeavor ;

It plants no pang, no rapture thrills,  
 But ah ! — it pleases ever !

Not yours is Cleopatra's eye,  
 And Juliet's tears you never knew :

Never will amorous Antony  
 Kiss kingdoms out for you !

Never for you will Romeo's love,  
 From deeps of moonlit musing,  
 break

To poetry above the glove  
 Whose touch may press your  
 cheek.

But ah, in one, — no Antony  
 Nor Romeo now, nor like to  
 these, —

(Whom neither Cleopatra's eye,  
 Nor Juliet's tears, could please)

How well they lull the lurking care  
 Which else within the mind en-  
 dures, —

That soft white hand, that soft dark  
 hair,

And that soft voice of yours !

So, while you stand, a fragile form,  
 With that close shawl around you  
 drawn,

And eve's last ardors fading warm  
 Adown the mountain lawn,

'Tis sweet, although we part to-  
 morrow,

And ne'er, the same, shall meet  
 again,

A while, from old habitual sorrow  
 To cease ; to cease from pain ;

To feel that, ages past, the soul  
 Hath lived — and ages hence will  
 live ;

And taste, in hours like this, the  
 whole

Of all the years can give.

Then, Lady, yet one moment stay,  
 While your sweet face makes all  
 things sweet,

For ah, the charm will pass away  
 Before again we meet !

#### NÆNIÆ.

SOFT, soft be thy sleep in the land  
 of the West,

Fated maiden !

Fair lie the flowers, love, and light,  
 on thy breast

Passion-laden,

In the place where thou art, by the  
 storm-beaten strand

Of the moaning Atlantic,

While, alone with my sorrow, I  
 roam through thy land,

The beloved, the romantic !

And thy faults, child, sleep where in  
 those dark eyes Death closes

All their doings and undoings ;

For who counts the thorns on last  
 year's perisht roses ?

Smile, dead rose, in thy ruins !

With thy beauty, its frailty is over.  
 No token

Of all which thou wast !

Not so much as the stem whence  
 the blossom was broken

Hath been spared by the frost.

With thy lips, and thine eyes, and  
 thy long golden tresses,

Cold . . . and so young too !

All lost, like the sweetness which  
 died with our kisses,

On the lips we once clung to.

Be it so! O too loved, and too lovely,  
 to linger  
 Where Age in its bareness  
 Creeps slowly, and Time with his  
 terrible finger  
 Effaces all fairness.  
 Thy being was but beauty, thy life  
 only rapture,  
 And, ere both were over,  
 Or yet one delight had escaped from  
 thy capture,  
 Death came, — thy last lover,  
 And found thee, . . . no care on thy  
 brow, in thy tresses  
 No silver — all gold there!  
 On thy lips, when he kissed them,  
 their last human kisses  
 Had scarcely grown cold there.  
 Thine was only earth's joy, not its  
 sorrow, its sinning,  
 Its friends that are foes too.  
 O, fair was thy life in its lovely be-  
 ginning,  
 And fair in its close too!  
 But I? . . . since we parted, both  
 mournful and many  
 Life's changes have been to me :  
 And of all the love-garlands Youth  
 wove me, not any  
 Remain that are green to me.  
 O, where are the nights, with thy  
 touch and thy breath in them,  
 Faint with heart-beating?  
 The fragrance, the darkness, the  
 life and the death in them,  
 — Parting and meeting?  
 All the world ours in that hour! . . .  
 O, the silence,  
 The moonlight, and, far in it,  
 O the one nightingale singing a  
 mile hence! [it!  
 The oped window — one star in  
 Sole witness of stolen sweet mo-  
 ments, unguessed of  
 By the world in its primness; —  
 Just one smile to adore by the star-  
 light: the rest of  
 Thy soul in the dimness!  
 If I glide through the door of thy  
 chamber, and sit there,

The old, faint, uncertain  
 Fragrance, that followed thee, surely  
 will flit there, —  
 O'er the chairs, — in the cur-  
 tain: —  
 But thou? . . . O thou missed, and  
 thou mourned one! O never,  
 Nevermore, shall we rove  
 Through chamber, or garden, or by  
 the dark river.  
 Soft lamps burn above!  
 O dead, child, dead, dead — all the  
 shrunken romance  
 Of the dream life begun with!  
 But thou, love, canst alter no more —  
 smile or glance;  
 Thy last change is done with.  
 As a moon that is sunken, a sunset  
 that's o'er,  
 So thy face keeps the semblance  
 Of the last look of love, the last  
 grace that it wore,  
 In my mourning remembrance.  
 As a strain from the last of thy  
 songs, when we parted,  
 Whose echoes thrill yet,  
 Through the long dreamless nights  
 of sad years, lonely-hearted,  
 With their haunting regret, —  
 Though nerveless the hand now,  
 and shattered the lute too,  
 Once vocal for me,  
 There floats through life's ruins,  
 when all's dark and mute too,  
 The music of thee!  
 Beauty, how brief! Life, how long!  
 . . . well, love's done now!  
 Down the path fate arranged for  
 me  
 I tread faster, because I must tread  
 it alone now.  
 — This is all that is changed  
 for me.  
 My heart must have broken, ere I  
 broke the fetter  
 Thyself didst undo, love.  
 — Ah, there's many a purer, and  
 many a better,  
 But more loved, . . . O, how few,  
 love!

## BOOK V.—IN HOLLAND.

## AUTUMN.

So now, then, Summer's over — by  
degrees.

Hark! 'tis the wind in yon red  
region grieves.

Who says the world grows  
better, growing old?

See! what poor trumpety on those  
pauper trees,

That cannot keep, for all their  
fine gold leaves,

Their last bird from the cold.

This is Dame Nature, puckered,  
pinched, and sour,

Of all the charms her poets  
praised, bereft,

Scowling and scolding (only  
hear her, there!)

Like that old spiteful Queen, in her  
last hour,

Whom Spenser, Shakespeare, sung  
to . . . nothing left

But wrinkles and red hair!

## LEAFLESS HOURS.

THE pale sun, through the spectral  
wood,

Gleams sparsely, where I pass:

My footstep, silent as my mood,

Falls in the silent grass.

Only my shadow points before me,

Where I am moving now:

Only sad memories murmur o'er me

From every leafless bough:

And out of the nest of last year's  
Redbreast

Is stolen the very snow.

ON MY TWENTY-FOURTH  
YEAR.

THE night's in November: the  
winds are at strife:

The snow's on the hill, and the  
ice on the mere:

The world to its winter is turned,  
and my life

To its twenty-fourth year.

The swallows are flown to the south  
long ago:

The roses are fallen: the wood-  
land is sere.

Hope's flown with the swallows:  
Love's rose will not grow

In my twenty-fourth year.

The snow on the threshold: the  
cold at the heart:

But the fagot to warm, and the  
wine-cup to cheer:

God's help to look up to: and cour-  
age to start

On my twenty-fourth year.

And 'tis well that the month of the  
roses is o'er!

The last, which I plucked for  
Neræa to wear,

She gave her new lover. A man  
should do more

With his twenty-fourth year

Than mourn for a woman, because  
she's unkind,

Or pine for a woman, because she  
is fair.

Ah, I loved you, Neræa! But now  
. . . never mind,

'Tis my twenty-fourth year!

What a thing! to have done with  
the follies of Youth,

Ere Age brings its follies! . . .  
though many a tear

It should cost, to see Love fly away,  
and find Truth

In one's twenty-fourth year.

The Past's golden valleys are drained.  
I must plant

On the Future's rough upland new  
harvests, I fear.

Ho, the plough and the team! . . .  
 who would perish of want  
 In his twenty-fourth year?

Man's heart is a well, which forever  
 renews

The void at the bottom, no sound-  
 ing comes near:

And Love does not die, though its  
 object I lose  
 In my twenty-fourth year.

The great and the little are only in  
 name.

The smoke from my chimney  
 casts shadows as drear

On the heart, as the smoke from  
 Vesuvius in flame:

And my twenty-fourth year,

From the joys that have cheered it,  
 the cares that have troubled,

What is wise to pursue, what is  
 well to revere,

May judge all as fully as though life  
 were doubled

To its forty-eighth year!

If the prospect grow dim, 'tis be-  
 cause it grows wide.

Every loss hath its gain. So,  
 from sphere on to sphere,

Man mounts up the ladder of Time:  
 so I stride

Up my twenty-fourth year!

Exulting? . . . no . . . sorrowing?  
 . . . no . . . with a mind

Whose regret chastens hope,  
 whose faith triumphs o'er fear:

Not repining: not confident: no,  
 but resigned

To my twenty-fourth year.

### JACQUELINE,

COUNTESS OF HOLLAND AND HAIN-  
 AULT.\*

Is it the twilight, or my fading sight,  
 Makes all so dim around me? No,  
 the night

Is come already. See! through yon-  
 der pane,

Alone in the gray air, that star  
 again —

Which shines so wan, I used to call  
 it mine

For its pale face: like Countess  
 Jacqueline

Who reigned in Brabant once . . .  
 that's years ago.

I called so much mine, then! so  
 much seemed so!

And see, my own! — of all those  
 things, my star

(Because God hung it there, in  
 heaven, so far

Above the reach and want of those  
 hard men) [Then

Is all they have not taken from me.  
 I call it still My Star. Why not?

The dust

Hath claimed the dust: no more.  
 And moth and rust

May rot the throne, the kingly pur-  
 ple fray:

What then? Yon star saw king-  
 doms rolled away

Ere mine was taken from me. It  
 survives.

But think, Beloved, — in that high  
 life of lives,

When our souls see the suns them-  
 selves burn low

Before that Sun of Righteousness,  
 — and know

What is, and was, before the suns  
 were lit, —

How love is all in all . . . Look, look  
 at it,

My star, — God's star, — for being  
 God's 'tis mine:

Had it been man's . . . no matter  
 . . . see it shine —

“good Duke Humphrey” of Gloucester, and finally wedded to Frank von Borselen, a gentleman of Zealand, in consequence of which marriage she lost even the title of Countess. She died at the age of thirty-six, after a life of unparalleled adventure and misfortune. See any Biographical Dictionary, or any History of the Netherlands.

\* Who was married to the impotent and worthless John of Brabant, affianced to

The old wan beam, which I have  
watched ere now  
So many a wretched night, when this  
poor brow  
Ached 'neath the sorrows of its  
thorny crown.  
*Its crown!* . . . ah, droop not, dear,  
those fond eyes down.  
No gem in all that shattered coronet  
Was half so precious as the tear  
which wet  
Just now this pale sick forehead. O  
my own,  
My husband, need was, that I should  
have known  
Much sorrow, — more than most  
Queens, — all know some, —  
Ere, dying, I could bless thee for the  
home  
Far dearer than the Palace, — call  
thy tear,  
The costliest gem that ever sparkled  
here.

Unfold me, my Belovéd. One more  
kiss.  
O, I must go! 'Twas willed I should  
not miss  
Life's secret, ere I left it. And now  
see, —  
My lips touch thine — thine arm en-  
circles me —  
The secret's found — God beckons —  
I must go.  
Earth's best is given. — Heaven's  
turn is come to show  
How much its best earth's best may  
yet exceed,  
Lest earth's should seem the very  
best indeed.  
So we must part a little; but not  
long.  
I seem to see it all. My lands be-  
long  
To Philip still; but thine will be my  
grave,  
(The only strip of land which I could  
save!)

Not much, but wide enough for  
some few flowers,

Thou'lt plant there, by and by, in  
later hours:  
Duke Humphry, when they tell him  
I am dead  
(And so young too!) will sigh, and  
shake his head,  
And if his wife should chide, "Poor  
Jacqueline,"  
He'll add, "You know she never  
could be mine."  
And men will say, when some one  
speaks of me,  
"Alas, it was a piteous history,  
The life of that poor countess!"  
For the rest  
Will never know, my love, how I  
was blest.  
Some few of my poor Zealanders,  
perchance,  
Will keep kind memories of me; and  
in France  
Some minstrel sing my story. Piti-  
less John  
Will prosper still, no doubt, as he  
has done,  
And still praise God with blood up-  
on the Rood.  
Philip will, doubtless, still be called  
"The Good."  
And men will curse and kill: and  
the old game  
Will weary out new hands: the love  
of fame  
Will sow new sins: thou wilt not be  
renowned:  
And I shall lie quite quiet under  
ground.  
My life is a torn book. But at the end  
A little page, quite fair, is saved, my  
friend,  
Where thou didst write thy name.  
No stain is there,  
No blot, — from marge to marge, all  
pure — no tear; —  
The last page, saved from all, and  
writ by thee,  
Which I shall take safe up to Hea-  
ven with me.  
All's not in vain, since this be so.  
Dost grieve?

Belovéd, I beseech thee to believe  
 Although this be the last page of  
 my life,  
 It is my heart's first, only one. Thy  
 \*wife,  
 Poor though she be, O thou sole  
 wealth of mine,  
 I happier than the Countess Jacque-  
 line!  
 And since my heart owns thine, say,  
 — am I not  
 A Queen, my chosen, though by all  
 forgot?  
 Though all forsake, yet is not this  
 thy hand?  
 I, a lone wanderer in a darkened  
 land,  
 I, a poor pilgrim with no staff of  
 hope,  
 I, a late traveller down the evening  
 slope,  
 Where any spark, the glow-worm's  
 by the way,  
 Had been a light to bless . . . have  
 I, O say,  
 Not found, Belovéd, in thy tender  
 eyes,  
 A light more sweet than morning's?  
 As there dies  
 Some day of storm all glorious in  
 its even,  
 My life grows loveliest as it fades  
 in heaven.  
 This earthly house breaks up. This  
 flesh must fade.  
 So many shocks of grief slow breach  
 have made  
 In the poor frame. Wrongs, insults,  
 treacheries,  
 Hopes broken down, and memory  
 which sighs  
 In, like a night-wind! Life was  
 never meant [ment.  
 To bear so much in such frail tene-  
 Why should we seek to patch and  
 plaster o'er  
 This shattered roof, crushed win-  
 dows, broken door  
 The light already shines through?  
 Let them break.

Yet would I gladly live for thy dear  
 sake,  
 O my heart's first and last, if that  
 could be!  
 In vain! . . . yet grieve not thou.  
 I shall not see  
 England again, and those white  
 cliffs; nor ever  
 Again those four gray towers beside  
 the river,  
 And London's roaring bridges:  
 never more  
 Those windows with the market-  
 stalls before,  
 Where the red-kirtled market-girls  
 went by  
 In the great square, beneath the  
 great gray sky,  
 In Brussels: nor in Holland, night  
 or day,  
 Watch those long lines of siege,  
 and fight at bay  
 Among my broken army, in default  
 Of Gloucester's failing forces from  
 Hainault:  
 Nor shall I pace again those gar-  
 dens green,  
 With their clipt alleys, where they  
 called me Queen,  
 In Brabant once. For all these  
 things are gone. [one,  
 But thee I shall behold, my chosen  
 Though we should seem whole  
 worlds on worlds apart,  
 Because thou wilt be ever\* in my  
 heart.  
 Nor shall I leave thee wholly. I  
 shall be  
 An evening thought, — a morning  
 dream to thee, —  
 A silence in thy life when, through  
 the night,  
 The bell strikes, or the sun, with  
 sinking light,  
 Smites all the empty windows. As  
 there sprout  
 Daisies, and dimpling tufts of vio-  
 lets, out  
 Among the grass where some corpse  
 lies asleep,



So round thy life, where I lie buried  
deep.

A thousand little tender thoughts  
shall spring,

A thousand gentle memories wind  
and cling. [soul

O, promise me, my own, before my  
Is houseless, — let the great world  
turn and roll

Upon its way unvext . . . Its  
pumps, its powers!

The dust says to the dust, . . . “the  
earth is ours.”

I would not, if I could, be Queen  
again

For all the walls of the wide world  
contain.

Be thou content with silence. Who  
would raise

A little dust and noise of human  
praise,

If he could see, in yonder distance  
dim, [him?

The silent eye of God that watches  
Oh! couldst thou see all that I see  
to-night

Upon the brinks of the great Infi-  
nite!

“Come out of her. my people, lest  
ye be

Partakers of her sins!” . . . My  
love, but we

Our treasure where no thieves break  
in and steal,

Have stored, I trust. Earth’s weal  
is not our weal.

Let the world mind its business —  
peace or war,

Ours is elsewhere. Look, look, —  
my star, my star!

It grows, it glows, it spreads in light  
unfurled; —

Said I “my star?” No star — a  
world — God’s world!

What hymns adown the jasper sea  
are rolled,

Even to these sick pillows! Who  
infold

White wings about me? Rest, rest,  
rest . . . I come!

O Love! I think that I am near my  
home.

Whence was that music? Was it  
Heaven’s I heard?

Write “Blesséd are the dead that  
die i’ the Lord,

Because they rest,” . . . because  
their toil is o’er.

The voice of weeping shall be heard  
no more

In the Eternal city. Neither dying,  
Nor sickness, pain nor sorrow, nei-  
ther crying,

For God shall wipe away all tears.  
Rest, rest,

Thy hand, my husband, — so — upon  
thy breast!

#### MACROMICROS.

It is the star of solitude  
Alight in yon lonely sky.

The sea is silent in its mood,  
Motherlike moaning a lullaby

To hush the hungering mystery  
To sleep on its breast subdued.

The night is alone, and I.

It is not the scene I am seeing,  
The lonely sky and the sea,

It is the pathos of Being  
That is making so dark in me

This silent and solemn hour: —  
The bale of baffled power,

The wail of unbaffled desire,  
The fire that must ever devour

The source by which it is fire.

My spirit expands, expands!

I spread out my soul on the sea.

I feel for yet unfound lands,  
And I find but the land where She

Sits, with her sad white hands,  
At her golden broidery,

In sight of the sorrowful sands,  
In an antique gallery,

Where, ever beside her, stands  
(Moodyly mimicking me)

The ghost of a something her heart  
demands

For a blessing which cannot be.

And broider, broider by night and  
day

The brede of thy blazing broidery !  
Till thy beauty be wholly woven  
away

Into the desolate tapestry.  
Let the thread be scarlet, the gold  
be gay,

For the damp to dim, and the moth  
to fray :

Weave in the azure, and crimson,  
and green !

Till the slow threads, needling out  
and in,

To take a fashion and form begin :  
Yet, for all the time and toil, I see  
The work is vain, and will not be  
Like what it was meant to have  
been.

O woman, woman, with face so  
pale !

Pale woman, weaving away  
A frustrate life at a lifeless  
loom,

Early or late, 'tis of little avail  
That thou lightest the lamp in  
the gloom.

Full well, I see, there is coming a day  
When the work shall forever rest  
incomplete.

Fling, fling the foolish blazon away,  
And weave me a winding-sheet !

It is not for thee in this dreary hour,  
That I walk, companionless here  
by the shore.

I am caught in the eddy and whirl  
of a power

Which is not grief, and is not love,  
Though it loves and grieves,

Within me, without me, wherever I  
move

In the going out of the ghostly  
eves,

And is changing me more and  
more.

I am not mourning for thee, al-  
though

I love thee, and thou art lost :  
Nor yet for myself, albeit I know

That my life is flawed and crost ;  
But for that sightless, sorrowing  
Soul

That is feeling blind with immor-  
tal pain,

All around, for what it can never  
attain ;

That prisoned, pining, and passion-  
ate soul,

So vast, and yet so small ;  
That seems, now nothing, now all,

That moves me to pity beyond con-  
trol,

And repulses pity again.  
I am mourning, since mourn I must,

With those patient Powers that  
bear,

'Neath the unattainable stars up  
there,

With the pomp and pall of funeral,  
Subject and yet august,

The weight of this world's dust : —  
The ruined giant under the rock :

The stricken spirit below the  
ocean :

And the winged things wounded of  
old by the shock

That set the earth in motion.  
Ah yet, . . . and yet, and yet,

If She were here with me,  
If she were here by the sea,

With the face I cannot forget,  
Then all things would not be

So fraught with my own regret,  
But what I should feel and see,

And seize it at last, at last, —  
The secret known and lost in the

past,  
To unseal the Genii that sleep

In vials long hid in the deep ;  
By forgotten, fashionless spells held

fast,  
Where through streets of the cities

of coral, aghast,  
The sea-nymphs wander and weep.

#### MYSTERY.

THE hour was one of mystery,  
When we were sailing, I and she.

Down the dark, the silent stream,  
The stars above were pale with love,  
And a wizard wind did faintly move,  
Like a whisper through a dream.

Her head was on my breast,  
Her loving little head!  
Her hand in mine was prest,  
And not a word we said;  
But round and round the night we  
wound,  
Till we came at last to the Isle of  
Fays;  
And, all the while, from the magic  
isle,  
Came that music, that music of  
other days!

The lamps in the garden gleamed.  
The Palace was all alight.  
The sound of the viols streamed  
Through the windows over the  
night.  
We saw the dancers pass  
At the windows, two by two.  
The dew was on the grass,  
And the glow-worm in the dew.

We came through the grass to the  
cypress-tree.  
We stood in its shadow, I and she.  
"Thy face is pale, thine eyes are  
wild.  
What aileth thee, what aileth  
thee?"

"Naught aileth me," she murmured  
mild,  
"Only the moonlight makes me  
pale;  
The moonlight, shining through the  
veil  
Of this black cypress-tree."

"By yonder moon, whose light so  
soon  
Will fade upon the gloom,  
And this black tree, whose mystery  
Is mingled with the tomb,—  
By Love's brief moon, and Death's  
dark tree,  
Lovest thou me?"

Upon my breast she leaned her  
head;  
"By yonder moon and tree,  
I swear that all my soul," she said,  
"Is given to thee."

"I know not what thy soul may be,  
Nor canst thou make it mine.  
Yon stars may all be worlds: for me  
Enough to know they shine.  
Thou art mine evening star. I know  
At dawn star-distant thou wilt be:  
I shall not hear thee murmuring  
low;  
Thy face I shall not see.  
I love thy beauty: 'twill not stay.  
Let it be all mine while it may.  
I have no bliss save in the kiss  
Thou givest me."

We came to the statue carved in  
stone,  
Over the fountain. We stood there  
alone.  
"What aileth thee, that thou dost  
sigh?  
And why is thy hand so cold?"  
"'Tis the fountain that sighs,"  
. . . she said, "not I;  
And the statue, whose hand thou  
dost hold."  
"By yonder fount, that flows for-  
ever,  
And this statue, that cannot  
move,—  
By the fountain of Time, that ceases  
never,  
And the fixedness of Love,—  
By motion and immutability,  
Lovest thou me?"

"By the fountain of Time, with its  
ceaseless flow,  
And the image of Love that rests,"  
sighed she,  
"I love thee, I swear, come joy  
come woe,  
For eternity!"

"Eternity is a word so long  
That I cannot spell it now;  
For the nightingale is singing her  
    song

From yon pomegranate bough.  
Let it mean what it may — Eternity,  
If thou lovest me now as I love thee,  
As I love thee!"

We came to the Palace. We  
    mounted the stair.  
The great hall-doors wide open  
    were.  
And all the dancers that danced in  
    the hall  
Greeted us to the festival.

There were ladies, as fair as fair  
    might be,  
But not one of them all was as fair  
    as she.

There were knights that looked at  
    them lovingly,  
But not one of them all was loving  
    as I.

Only, each noble cavalier  
Had his throat red-lined from ear  
    to ear;

'Twas a collar of merit, I have  
    heard,  
Which a Queen upon each had once  
    conferred.

And each lovely lady that oped her  
    lip

Let a little mouse's tail outslip;  
'Twas the fashion there, I know not  
    why,

But fashions are changing con-  
    stantly.

From the crescented naphtha lamps  
    each ray

    Streamed into a still enchanted  
    blaze; —

And forth from the deep-toned  
    orchestra

    That music, that music of other  
    days!

My arm enlaced her winsome waist,  
And down the dance we flew:

We flew, we raced: our lips em-  
    braced:

And our breath was mingled too.  
Round, and round, to a magic  
    sound —

(A wizard waltz to a wizard  
    air!)

Round and round, we whirled, we  
    wound,

    In a circle light and fine:

    My cheek was fanned by her  
    fragrant hair,

And her bosom beat on mine:

And all the while, in the winding  
    ways,

That music, that music of other  
    days,

    With its melodies divine!

The palace clock stands in the hall,  
And talks, unheard, of the flight  
    of time:

With a face too pale for a festival  
    It telleth a tale too sad for rhyme.

The palace clock, with a silver note,  
Is chanting the death of the hour  
    that dies.

"What aileth thee? for I see float  
    A shade into thine eyes."

"Naught aileth me," . . . low  
    murmured she,

    "I am faint with the dance, my  
    love,

Give me thine arm: the air is  
    warm:

    Lead me unto the grove."

We wandered into the grove. We  
    found

A flower by woodbine woven round.

Upon my breast she leaned her  
    head:

    I drew her into the bower apart.

"I swear to thee, my love," she  
    said,

    "Thou hast my heart!"

"Ah, leave thy little heart at rest!  
For it is so light, I think, so  
    light,

Some wind would blow it away  
to-night,  
If it were not safe in thy breast.  
But the wondrous brightness on  
thine hair

Did never seem more bright :  
And thy beauty never looked more  
fair

Than thy beauty looks to-night :  
And this dim hour, and this wild  
bower,

Were made for our delight :  
Here we will stay, until the day,  
In yon dark east grows white."

"This may not be," . . . she an-  
swered me,

"For I was lately wed  
With a diamond ring to an OGRE-  
king.

And I am his wife," . . . she  
said.

"My husband is old, but his crown  
is of gold :

And he hath a cruel eye :  
And his arm is long, and his hand  
is strong,

And his body is seven ells high ;  
And alas ! I fear, if he found us  
here,

That we both should surely die.

"All day I take my harp, and play  
To him on a golden string :

Thorough the weary livelong day  
I play to him, and sing :

I sing to him till his white hair  
Begins to curl and creep :  
And his wrinkles old slowly unfold,  
And his brows grow smooth as  
sleep.

But at night, when he calls for his  
golden cup,

Into his wine I pour  
A juice which he drinks duly up,  
And sleeps till the night is o'er.  
For one moment I wait : I look at  
him straight,

And tell him for once how much  
I detest him :

I have no fear lest he should hear,

The drug he hath drained hath so  
oppress him.

Then, finger on lip, away I slip,  
And down the hills, till I reach  
the stream : [pear,

I call to thee clear, till the boat ap-  
And we sail together through  
dark and dream.

And sweet it is, in this Isle of Fays,  
To wander at will through a gar-  
den of flowers,

While the flowers that bloom, and  
the lamps that blaze,

And the very nightingales seem  
ours ! [ways

And sweeter it is, in the winding  
Of the waltz, while the music  
falls in showers,

While the minstrel plays, and the  
moment stays,

And the sweet brief rapture of  
love is ours !

"But the night is far spent ; and  
before the first rent

In yon dark blue sky overhead,  
My husband will wake, and the spell  
will break,

And peril is near," . . . she said.

"For if he should wake, and not  
find me,  
By bower and brake, thorough bush  
and tree,

He will come to seek me here ;  
And the Palace of Fays, in one  
vast blaze,

Will sink and disappear ;  
And the nightingales will die in the  
vales,

And all will be changed and drear !  
For the fays and elves can take  
care of themselves :

They will slip on their slippers,  
and go :

In their little green cloaks they will  
hide in the oaks,

And the forests and brakes, for  
their sweet sakes,

Will cover and keep them, I  
know.

and the knights, with their spurs,  
 and velvets and furs,  
 Will take off their heads, each  
 one,  
 And to horse, and away, as fast as  
 they may,  
 Over brook, and bramble, and  
 stone;  
 And each dame of the house has a  
 little dun mouse,  
 That will whisper her when to be  
 gone;  
 But we, my love, in this desolate  
 grove,  
 We shall be left alone;  
 And my husband will find us, take  
 us and bind us:  
 In his cave he will lock me up,  
 And pledge me for spite in thy blood  
 by night  
 When he drains down his golden  
 cup."

"Thy husband, dear, is a monster,  
 'tis clear,  
 But just now I will not tarry  
 Thy choice to dispute—how on earth  
 such a brute  
 Thou hadst ever the fancy to  
 marry.  
 For wherefore, meanwhile, are we  
 two here,  
 In a fairy island under a spell,  
 By night, in a magical atmosphere,  
 In a lone enchanted dell,  
 If we are to say and do no more  
 Than is said and done by the dull  
 daylight,  
 In that dry old world, where both  
 must ignore,  
 To-morrow, the dream of to-  
 night."

Her head drooped on my breast,  
 Fair foolish little head!  
 Her lips to mine were prest.  
 Never a word was said.  
 If it were but a dream of the night,  
 A dream that I dreamed in sleep—  
 Why, then, is my face so white,  
 And this wound so red and deep?

But whatever it was, it all took place  
 In a land where never your steps  
 will go,  
 Though they wander, wherever they  
 will, through space;  
 In an hour you never will know,  
 Though you should outlive the  
 crow  
 That is like to outlive your race.

And if it were but a dream, it broke  
 Too soon, albeit too late I woke  
 Waked by the smart of a sounding  
 stroke  
 Which has so confused my wits,  
 That I cannot remember, and never  
 shall,  
 What was the close of that festival,  
 Nor how the Palace was shat-  
 tered to bits:  
 For all that, just now, I think I  
 know,  
 Is what is the force of an Ogre's  
 blow,  
 As my head, by starts and fits,  
 Aches and throbs; and, when I look  
 round,  
 All that I hear is the sickening  
 sound  
 Of the nurse's watch, and the doc-  
 tor's boots,  
 Instead of the magical fairy flutes;  
 And all that I see, in my love's lost  
 place,  
 Is that gin-drinking hag, with her  
 nut-cracker face,  
 By the hearth's half-burned out  
 wood:  
 And the only stream is this stream  
 of blood  
 That flows from me, red and wide:  
 Yet still I hear,—as sharp and clear  
 In the horrible, horrible silence out-  
 side,  
 The clock that stands in the empty  
 hall,  
 And talks to my soul of the flight of  
 time;  
 With a face like a face at a fu-  
 neral,  
 Telling a tale too sad for rhyme:

And still I hear, with as little cheer,  
 In the yet more horrible silence  
 inside,  
 Chanted, perchance, by elves and  
 fays,  
 From some far island, out of my  
 gaze,  
 Where a house has fallen, and  
 some one has died,  
 That music, that music of other  
 days,  
 With its minstrelsy undescried!  
 For time, which surviveth every-  
 thing,  
 And Memory which surviveth  
 Time:—  
 These two sit by my side, and sing,  
 A song too sad for rhyme.

## THE CANTICLE OF LOVE.

I ONCE heard an angel, by night, in  
 the sky,  
 Singing softly a song to a deep  
 golden lute:  
 The polestar, the seven littleplanets,  
 and I,  
 To the song that he sung listened  
 mute.  
 For the song that he sung was so  
 strange and so sweet,  
 And so tender the tones of his  
 lute's golden strings,  
 That the Seraphs of Heaven sat  
 husht at his feet,  
 And folded their heads in their  
 wings.

And the song that he sung by those  
 Seraphs up there  
 Is called . . . "Love." But the  
 words, I had heard them else-  
 where.

For, when I was last in the nether-  
 most Hell,  
 On a rock 'mid the sulphurous  
 surges, I heard  
 ▲ pale spirit sing to a wild hollow  
 shell,

And his song was the same, every  
 word.  
 But so sad was his singing, all Hell  
 to the sound  
 Moaned, and, wailing, complained  
 like a monster in pain,  
 While the fiends hovered near o'er  
 the dismal profound,  
 With their black wings weighed  
 down by the strain.

And the song that was sung by the  
 Lost Ones down there  
 Is called . . . "Love." But the  
 spirit that sung was Despair.

When the moon sets to-night, I will  
 go down to ocean,  
 Bare my brow to the breeze, and  
 my heart to its anguish;  
 And sing till the Siren with pining  
 emotion  
 (Unroused in her sea-caves) shall  
 languish.  
 And the Sylphs of the water shall  
 crouch at my feet,  
 With their white wistful faces  
 turned upward to hear,  
 And the soft Salamanders shall float,  
 in the heat  
 Of the ocean volcanoes, more near.

For the song I have learned, all that  
 listen shall move:  
 But there's one will not listen, and  
 that one I love.

## THE PEDLAR.

THERE was a man, whom you might  
 see,  
 Toward nightfall, on the dusty  
 track,  
 Faring, footsore and wearily—  
 A strong box on his back.  
 A speck against the flaring sky,  
 You saw him pass the line o'  
 dates,  
 The camel-drivers loitering by  
 From Bagdad's dusking gates.

The merchants from Bassora stared,  
And of his wares would question  
him.

But, without answer, on he fared  
Into the evening dim.

Not only in the east: but oft  
In northern lands of ice and snow,  
You might have seen, past field and  
croft,  
That figure faring slow.

His cheek was worn; his back bent  
double

Beneath the iron box he bore;  
And in his walk there seemed such  
trouble,

You saw his feet were sore.

You wondered if he ever had  
A settled home, a wife, a child;  
You marvelled if a face so sad  
At any time had smiled.

The cheery housewife oft would  
fling

A pitying alms, as on he strode,  
Where, round the hearth, a rosy  
ring,

Her children's faces glowed:

In the dark doorway, oft the maid,  
Late-lingering on her lover's arm,  
Watched through the twilight, half  
afraid,

That solitary form.

The traveller hailed him oft, . . .  
"Good night:

The town is far: the road is lone:  
God speed!" . . . already out of  
sight,

The wayfarer was gone.

But, when the night was late and  
still,

And the last star of all had crept  
Into his place above the hill,  
He laid him down and slept.

His head on that strong box he laid:  
And there, beneath the star-cold  
skies,

In slumber, I have heard it said,  
There rose before his eyes

A lovely dream, a vision fair,  
Of some far-off, forgotten land,  
And of a girl with golden hair,  
And violets in her hand.

He sprang to kiss her . . . "Ah!  
once more

Return, beloved, and bring with  
thee

The glory and delight of yore, —  
Lost evermore to me!

Then, ere she answered, o'er his  
back

There fell a brisk and sudden  
stroke, —

So sound and resolute a thwack  
That, with the blow, he woke . . .

There comes out of that iron box  
An ugly hag, an angry crone;  
Her crutch about his ears she  
knocks:

She leaves him not alone:

"Thoulazy vagabond! come, budge,  
And carry me again," . . . she  
says:

"Not half the journey's over . . .  
trudge!"

. . . He groans, and he obeys.

Oft in the sea he sought to fling  
That iron box. But witches swim:  
And wave and wind were sure to  
bring

The old hag back to him;

Who all the more about his brains  
Belabored him with such hard  
blows,

That the poor devil, for his pains,  
Wished himself dead, heaven  
knows!

*Love, is it thy hand in mine? . . .*  
Behold!

I see the crutch uplifted high.  
The angry hag prepares to scold.

*O, yet we might . . . . . Good  
by!*



## A GHOST STORY.

I LAY awake past midnight :  
The moon set o'er the snow :  
The very cocks, for coldness,  
Could neither sleep nor crow.

There came to me, near morning,  
A woman pale and fair :  
She seemed a monarch's daughter,  
By the red gold round her hair.

The ring upon her finger  
Was one that I well know :  
I knew her fair face also,  
For I had loved it so !

But I felt I saw a spirit,  
And I was sore afraid ;  
For it is many and many a year  
Ago, since she was dead.

I would have spoken to her,  
But I could not speak, for fear :  
Because it was a homeless ghost  
That walked beyond its sphere ;

Till her head from her white shoulders  
She lifted up : and said . . .  
*"Look in ! you'll find I'm hollow.  
Pray do not be afraid !"*

## SMALL PEOPLE.

THE warm moon was up in the sky,  
And the warm summer out on the land.

There trembled a tear from her eye :  
There trembled a tear on my hand.

Her sweet face I could not see clear,  
For the shade was so dark in the tree :

I only felt touched by a tear,  
And I thought that the tear was  
for me.

In her small ear I whispered a word—  
With her sweet lips she laughed  
in my face

And, as light through the leaves as  
a bird,  
She flitted away from the place.

Then she told to her sister, the  
Snake,  
All I said, and her cousin the  
Toad.

The Snake slipped away to the brake,  
The Toad went to town by the  
road.

The Toad told the Devil's coach-  
horse,  
Who cock'd up his tail at the  
news.

The Snake hissed the secret, of  
course,  
To the Newt, who was changing  
her shoes.

The Newt drove away to the ball,  
And told it the Scorpion and Asp.  
The Spider, who lives in the wall,  
Overheard it, and told it the Wasp.

The Wasp told the Midge and the  
Gnat :  
And the Gnat told the Flea and  
the Nit.

The Nit dropped an egg as she sat :  
The Flea shrugged his shoulders,  
and bit.

The Nit and the Flea are too small,  
And the Snake slips from under  
my foot :

I wish I could find 'mid them all  
A man, — to insult and to shoot'.

## METEMPSYCHOSIS.

SHE fanned my life out with her  
soft little sighs :

She hushed me to death with her  
face so fair :

I was drunk with the light of her  
wild blue eyes,  
And strangled dumb in her long  
gold hair.

So now I'm a blesséd and wandering  
ghost,  
Though I cannot quite find out my  
way up to heaven :  
But I hover about o'er the long  
reedy coast,  
In the wistful light of a low red  
even.

I have borrowed the coat of a little  
gray gnat :  
There's a small sharp song I have  
learned how to sing :  
I know a green place she is sure to  
be at :  
I shall light on her neck there,  
and sting, and sting.

Tra-la-la, tra-la-la, life never pleased  
me !

I fly where I list now, and sleep  
at my ease.  
Buzz, buzz, buzz ! the dead only are  
free.

Yonder's my way now. Give  
place, if you please.

#### TO THE QUEEN OF SERPENTS.

I TRUST that never more in this  
world's shade  
Thine eyes will be upou me : never  
more  
Thy face come back to me. For  
thou hast made  
My whole life sore :

And I might curse thee, if thou  
camest again

To mock me with the memory in  
thy face

Of days I would had been not. So  
much pain  
Hath made me base—

Enough to wreak the wrath of years  
of wrong  
Even on so frail and weak a thing  
as thou !

Fare hence, and be forgotten. . . .  
Sing thy song,  
And braid thy brow,

And be beloved, and beautiful ;  
and be

In beauty baleful still . . . a Ser-  
pent Queen [thee,  
To others not yet curst by kissing  
As I have been.

But come not nigh me till my end  
be near,

And I have turned a dying face  
toward heaven.

Then, if thou wilt, approach, — and  
have no fear,  
And be forgiven.

Close, if thou wilt, mine eyes, and  
smooth my hair :

Fond words will come upou my  
parting breath.

Nor, having desolated life, forbear  
Kind offices to death.

#### BLUEBEARD.

I WAS to wed young Fatima,  
As pure as April's snowdrops are,  
In whose love lay hid my crooked  
life,  
As in its sheath my cimeter.

Among the hot pomegranate boughs,  
At sunset, here alone we sat.

To call back something from that  
hour

I'd give away my Caliphat.

She broke her song to gaze at me :  
Her lips she leaned my lips  
above . . .

"Why art thou silent all this while,  
Lord of my life, and of my love?"

"*Silent I am, young Fatima,  
For silent is my soul in me,  
And language will not help the want  
Of that which cannot ever be.*"

"But wherefore is thy spirit sad,  
My lord, my love, my life?" . . .  
she said.

"*Because thy face is wondrous like  
The face of one I knew, that  
dead.*"

“ Ah cruel, cruel,” cried Fatima,  
 “ That I should not possess the  
 past!  
 What woman’s lips first kissed the  
 lips  
 Where my kiss lived and lingered  
 last.”

“ And she that’s dead was loved by  
 thee,  
 That so her memory moves thee  
 yet? . . .  
 Thy face grows cold and white, as  
 looks  
 The moon o’er yonder minaret !”

“ *Ay, Fatima! I loved her well,  
 With all of love’s and life’s de-  
 spair,  
 Or else I had not strangled her,  
 That night, in her own fatal hair.*”

#### FATIMA.

A YEAR ago thy cheek was bright,  
 As oleander buds that break  
 The dark of yonder dells by night  
 Above the lamp-lit lake.

Pale as a snowdrop in Cashmere  
 Thy face to-night, fair infant,  
 seems.

Ah, wretched child! What dost  
 thou hear  
 When I talk in my dreams?

#### GOING BACK AGAIN.

I DREAMED that I walked in Italy  
 When the day was going down,  
 By a water that flowed quite silently  
 Through an old dim-lighted town:

Till I came to a Palace fair to see:  
 Wide open the windows were:  
 My love at a window sat, and she  
 Beckoned me up the stair.

I roamed through many a corridor  
 And many a chamber of state:  
 I passed through many an open door,  
 While the day was growing late:

Till I came to the Bridal Chamber at  
 last,  
 All dim in the darkening weather;  
 The flowers at the window were talk-  
 ing fast,  
 And whispering all together.

The place was so still that I could  
 hear  
 Every word that they said:  
 They were whispering under their  
 breath with fear,  
 For somebody there was dead.

When I came to the little rose-colored  
 room,  
 From the window there flew a bat.  
 The window was opened upon the  
 gloom:  
 My love at the window sat.

She sat with her guitar on her knee,  
 But she was not singing a note,  
 For some one had drawn (ah, who  
 could it be?)  
 A knife across her throat.

#### THE CASTLE OF KING MAC- BETH.

THIS is the castle of King Macbeth.  
 And here he feasts — when the  
 daylight wanes,  
 And the moon goes softly over the  
 heath —  
 His Earls and Thaners.

A hundred harpers with harps of gold  
 Harp through the night high festi-  
 val:  
 And the sound of the music they  
 make is rolled  
 From hall to hall.

They drink deep healths till the  
 rafters rock  
 In the Banquet Hall; and the  
 shout is borne  
 To the courts outside, where the  
 crowing cock  
 Is waked ere morn.

And the castle is all in a blaze of  
light

From cresset, and torch, and  
sconce: and there  
Each warrior dances all the night  
With his lady fair.

They dance and sing till the raven  
is stirred

On the wicked elm-tree outside in  
the gloom:

And the rustle of silken robes is  
heard

From room to room.

But there is one room in that castle  
old,

In a lonely turret where no one  
goes,

And a dead man sits there, stark and  
cold,

Whom no one knows.

#### DEATH-IN-LIFE.

BLEST is the babe that dies within  
the womb.

Blest is the corpse which lies within  
the tomb.

And blest that death for which this  
life makes room.

But dreary is the tomb where the  
corpse lies:

And wretched is the womb where  
the child dies:

And curst that death which steals  
this life's disguise.

#### KING LIMOS.

THERE once was a wicked, old, gray  
king—

Long damned, as I have reason  
to know,

For he was buried (and no bad  
thing!)

Hundreds of years ago.

His wicked old heart had grown so  
chilled

That the leech, to warn him, did  
not shrink

To give him each night a goblet,  
filled

With a virgin's blood, to drink.

"A splenetic legend," . . . you say,  
of course!

Yet there may be something in it,  
too.

Kill, or be killed . . . which choice  
were the worse?

I know not. Solve it you.

But even the wolf must have his  
prey:

And even the gallows will have  
her food:

And a king, my friend, will have his  
way,

Though that way may lie through  
blood.

My heart is hungry, and must be fed;  
My life is empty, and must be filled;

One is not a Ghoul, to live on the  
dead:

What then if fresh blood be spilled?

We follow the way that nature leads.  
What's the very first thing that

we learn? To devour.

Each life the death of some other  
needs

To help it from hour to hour.

From the animalcule that swallows  
his friends,

Nothing loath, in the wave as it  
rolls,

To man, as we see him, this law  
ascends;

'Tis the same in the world of souls.

The law of the one is still to absorb:  
To be absorbed is the other's lot:—

The lesser orb by the larger orb,  
The weak by the strong . . . why

not?

My want's at the worst: so why  
 should I spare  
 (Since just such a thing my want  
 supplies)

This little girl with the silky hair,  
 And the love in her two large eyes?

### THE FUGITIVE.

THERE is no quiet left in life,  
 Not any moment brings me rest:  
 Forevermore, from shore to shore,  
 I bear about a laden breast.

I see new lands: I meet new men:  
 I learn strange tongues in novel  
 places.

I cannot chase one phantom face  
 That haunts me, spite of newer  
 faces.

For me the wine is poured by night,  
 And deep enough to drown much  
 sadness;

But from the cup that face looks up,  
 And mirth and music turn to mad-  
 ness.

There's many a lip that's warm for  
 me:  
 Many a heart with passion bound-  
 ing:

But ah, my breast, when closest  
 prest,  
 Creeps to a cold step near me  
 sounding.

To this dark penthouse of the mind  
 I lure the bat-winged Sleep in  
 vain;

For on his wings a dream he brings  
 That deepens all the dark with  
 pain.

I may write books which friends will  
 praise,

I may win fame, I may win treas-  
 ure;

But hope grows less with each suc-  
 cess,

And pain grows more with every  
 pleasure.

The draughts I drain to slake my  
 thirst

But fuel more the infernal flame.

There tangles a sting in everything:—  
 The more I change, the more the  
 same!

A man that flies before the pest,  
 From wind to wind my course is  
 whirled.

This fly accurst stung I first,  
 And drove her wild across the  
 world!

### THE SHORE.

CAN it be women that walk in the sea-mist under the cliffs there?  
 Where, 'neath a briny bow, creaming, advances the lip  
 Of the foam, and out from the sand-choked anchors, on to the skiffs there,  
 The long ropes swing through the surge, as it tumbles; and glitter, and  
 drip.

All the place in a lurid, glimmering, emerald glory,  
 Glares like a Titan world come back under heaven again:  
 Yonder, up there, are the steeps of the sea-kings, famous in story,  
 But who are they on the beach? They are neither women, nor men.

Who knows, are they the land's, or the water's, living creatures?  
 Born of the boiling sea? nursed in the seething storms?  
 With their woman's hair dislevelled over their stern male features,  
 Striding, bare to the knee; magnified maritime forms!

They may be the mothers and wives, they may be the sisters and daughters  
 Of men on the dark mid-seas, alone in those black-coiled hulls,  
 That toil 'neath you white cloud, whence the moon will rise o'er the waters  
 To-night, with her face on fire, if the wind in the evening lulls.

But they may be merely visions, such as only sick men witness  
 (Sitting as I sit here, filled with wild regret),  
 Framed from the sea's misshapen spume with a horrible fitness  
 To the winds in which they walk, and the surges by which they are  
 wet:—

Salamanders, sea-wolves, witches, warlocks; marine monsters,  
 Which the dying seaman beholds, when the rats are swimming away,  
 And an Indian wind 'gins hiss from an unknown isle, and alone stirs  
 The broken cloud which burns on the verge of the dead, red day,

I know not. All in my mind is confused; nor can I dis sever  
 The mould of the visible world from the shape of my thoughts in me.  
 The Inward and Outward are fused: and, through them, murmur forever  
 The sorrow whose sound is the wind, and the roar of the limitless sea.

#### THE NORTH SEA.

By the gray sand-hills, o'er the cold sea-shore; where, dumbly peering,  
 Pass the pale-sailed ships, scornfully, silently; wheeling and veering  
 Swift out of sight again; while the wind searches what it finds never,  
 O'er the sand-reaches, bays, billows, blown beaches,—homeless forever!  
 And, in a vision of the bare heaven seen and soon lost again,  
 Hovers the sea-gull, poised in the wind above, o'er the bleak surges,  
 In the green briny gleam, briefly revealed and gone; . . . fleet, as emerges  
 Out of the tumult of some brain where memory labors, and fretfully  
 Moans all the night-long,—a wild wingéd hope, soon fading regretfully.  
 Here walk the lost Gods o' dark Scandinavia, morning and even;  
 Faint pale divinities, realmless and sorrowful, exiled from Heaven;  
 Burthened with memories of old theogonies; each ruined monarchy  
 Roaming amazed by seas oblivious of ancient fealty.  
 Never, again at the tables of Odin, in their lost Banquet Hall,  
 Shall they from golden cups drink, hearing golden harps, harping high  
 festival.

Never praise bright-haired Freya, in Vingolf, for her lost loveliness!  
 Never, with Ægir, sail round cool moonlit isles of green wilderness!  
 Here on the lone wind, through the long twilight, when day is waning,  
 Many a hopeless voice near the night is heard coldly complaining,  
 Here, in the glimmering darkness, when winds are dropped, and not a  
 seaman sings  
 From cape or foreland, pause, and pass silently, forms of discrowned  
 kings,

With sweeping, floating folds of dim garments; wandering in wonder  
 Of their own aspect; trooping towards midnight; feeling for thunder.

Here, in the afternoon; while, in her father's boat, heavily laden,  
Mending the torn nets, sings up the bleak bay the Fisher-Maiden,  
I too, forlornly wandering, wandering, see, with the mind's eye,  
Shadows beside me, . . . (hearing the wave moan, hearing the wind  
sigh) . . .

Shadows, and images balefully beautiful, of days departed :

Sounds of faint footsteps, gleams of pale foreheads, make me sad-hearted,  
Sad for the lost, irretrievable sweetness of former hours ;  
Sad with delirious, desolate odors, from faded flowers ;  
Sad for the beautiful gold hair, the exquisite, exquisite graces  
Of a divine face, hopelessly unlike all other faces !

O'er the gray sand-hills (where I sit sullenly, full of black fancies),  
Nipt by the sea-wind, drenched by the sea-salt, little wild pansies  
Flower, and freshly tremble, and twinkle ; sweet sisterhoods,  
Lone, and how lovely, with their frail green stems, and dark purple  
hoods !

Here, even here in the midst of monotonous, fixt desolation,  
Nature has touches of tenderness, beauties of young variation ;  
Where, O my heart, in thy ruined, and desolate places,  
Springs there a floweret, or gleams there the green of a single oasis?  
Hidden, it may be perchance, and I know it not . . . hidden yet invio-  
late,

Pushes the germ of an unconscious rapture in me, like the violet  
Which, on the bosom of March, the snows cover and keep till the coming  
Of April, the first bee shall find, when he wanders, and welcome it hum-  
ming.

Teach me, thou North where the winds lie in ambush ; the rains and foul  
weather

Are stored in the house of the storms ; and the snow-flakes are garnered  
together ;

Where man's stern, dominate, sovereign intelligence holds in allegiance  
Whatever blue Sirius beholds on this Earth-ball, — all seas, and all regions .  
The iron in the hill's heart ; the spirit in the loadstone ; the ice in the  
poles ;

All powers, all dominions ; ships ; merchandise ; armaments ; beasts ;  
human souls ; . . .

Teach me thy secrets : teach to refrain, to restrain, to be still ;  
Teach me unspoken, steadfast endurance ; — the silence of Will !

A NIGHT IN THE FISHER-  
MAN'S HUT.

PART I.

THE FISHERMAN'S DAUGHTER.

If the wind had been blowing the  
Devil this way  
The midnight could scarcely have  
grown more unholy,

Or the sea have found secrets more  
wicked to say  
To the toothless old crags it is  
hiding there wholly.

I love well the darkness. I love  
well the sound  
Of the thunder-drift, howling this  
way over ocean.

For 'tis though as in nature my  
spirit has found  
A trouble akin to its own free  
emotion.

The hoarse night may howl herself  
silent for me.

When the silence comes, then  
comes the howling within.  
I am drenched to my knees in the  
surf of the sea,  
And wet with the salt bitter rain  
to the skin.

Let it thunder and lighten! this  
world's ruined angel  
Is but fooled by desire like the  
frailest of men;  
Both seek in hysterics life's awful  
evangel,  
Then both settle down to life's si-  
lence again.

Well I know the wild spirits of water  
and air,  
When the lean morrow turns up  
its cynical gray,  
Will, baffled, revert with familiar  
despair  
To their old listless work, in their  
old helpless way.

Yonder's the light in the Fisher-  
man's hut;  
But the old wolf himself is, I  
know, off at sea.  
And I see through the chinks, though  
the shutters be shut,  
By the firelight that some one is  
watching for me.

Three years ago, on this very same  
night,  
I walked in a ball-room of perfume  
and splendor  
With a pearl-bedecked lady below  
the lamplight:—  
Now I walk with the wild wind,  
whose breath is more tender.

Hark! the horses of ocean that  
crouch at my feet,  
They are moaning in impotent  
pain on the beach!

Lo! the storm-light, that swathes  
in its blue winding-sheet  
That lone desert of sky, where the  
stars are dead, each!

Holloa, there! open, you little wild  
girl!

Hush, . . . 'tis her soft little feet  
o'er the floor.  
Stay not to tie up a single dark curl,  
But quick with the candle, and  
open the door.

One kiss? . . . there's twenty! . . .  
but first, take my coat there,  
Salt as a sea-sponge, and dripping  
all through.

The old wolf, your father, is out in  
the boat there.  
Hark to the thunder! . . . we're  
safe, — I and you.

Put on the kettle. And now for the  
cask  
Of that famous old rum of your  
father's, the king  
Would have clawed on our frontier.  
There, fill me the flask.  
Ah, what a quick, little, neat-  
handed thing!

There's my pipe. Stuff it with black  
negro-head.  
Soon I shall be in the cloud-land  
of glory.

Faith, 'tis better with you, dear,  
than 'fore the mast-head,  
With such lights at the windows  
of night's upper story!

Next, over the round open hole in  
the shutter  
You may pin up your shawl, . . .  
lest a mermaid should peep.  
Come, now, the kettle's beginning  
to splutter,  
And the cat recomposes herself  
into sleep.

Poor little naked feet, . . . put them  
up there. . .  
Little white foam-flakes! and now  
the soft head,



Here, on my shoulder; while all  
the dark hair  
Falls round us like sea-weed.  
What matter the bed

If sleep will visit it, if kisses feel  
there  
Sweet as they feel under curtains  
of silk?

So, shut your eyes, while the fire-  
light will steal there  
O'er the black bear-skin, the arm  
white as milk!

Meanwhile I'll tell to you all I remem-  
ber

Of the old legend, the northern  
romance

I heard of in Sweden, that snowy  
December

I passed there, about the wild  
Lord Rosencrantz.

Then, when you're tired, take the  
cards from the cupboard,  
Thumbed over by every old thief  
in our crew,

And I'll tell you your fortune, you  
little Dame Hubbard;

My own has been squandered on  
witches like you.

Knave, King, and Queen, all the vil-  
lanous pack of 'em,

I know what they're worth in the  
game, and have found

Upon all the trump-cards the small  
mark at the back of 'em,

The Devil's nail-mark, who still  
cheats us all round.

## PART II.

THE LEGEND OF LORD ROSEN-  
CRANTZ.

THE lamps in the castle hall burn  
bright,

And the music sounds, and the  
dancers dance,

And lovely the young Queen looks  
to-night,

But pale is Lord Rosencrantz.

Lord Rosencrantz is always pale,  
But never more deadly pale than  
now . . .

O, there is a whisper, an ancient  
tale, —

A rumor, . . . but who should  
know?

He has stepped to the daïs. He has  
taken her hand.

And she gives it him with a ten-  
der glance.

And the hautboys sound, and the  
dancers stand,

And envy Lord Rosencrantz.

That jewelled hand to his lips he  
prest;

And lightly he leads her towards  
the dance:

And the blush on the young Queen's  
cheek confest

Her love for Lord Rosencrantz.

The moon at the mullioned window  
shone;

There a face and a hand in the  
moonlight glance;

But that face and that hand were  
seen of none,

Save only Lord Rosencrantz.

A league aloof in the forest-land  
There's a dead black pool, where  
a man by chance

. . . Again, again, that beckoning  
hand!

And it beckons Lord Rosencrantz.

While the young Queen turned to  
whisper him,

Lord Rosencrantz from the hall  
was gone;

And the hautboys ceased, and the  
lamps grew dim,

And the castle clock struck One!

\* \* \* \*

It is a bleak December night,  
And the snow on the highway  
gleams by fits:

But the fire on the cottage-hearth  
burns bright,

Where the little maiden sits.

Her spinning-wheel she has laid  
aside;  
And her blue eyes soft in the fire-  
light glance;  
As she leans with love, and she  
leans with pride,  
On the breast of Lord Rosen-  
crantz.

Mother's asleep, up stairs in bed:  
And the black cat, she looks won-  
drous wise  
As she licks her paws in the firelight  
red,  
And glares with her two green  
eyes:

And the little maiden is half afraid,  
And closely she clings to Lord  
Rosencrantz;  
For she has been reading, that little  
maid,  
All day, in an old romance,

A legend wild of a wicked pool  
A league aloof in the forest-land,  
And a crime done there, and a sin-  
ful soul,  
And an awful face and hand.

"Our little cottage is bleak and  
dreary,"  
Says the little maid to Lord Ros-  
encrantz;

"And this is the loneliest time of  
the year,  
And oft, when the wind, by  
chance,

"The ivy beats on the window-pane,  
I wake to the sound in the gusty  
nights;  
And often, outside, in the drift and  
rain,  
There seem to pass strange sights.

"And O, it is dreary here alone!  
When mother's asleep, in bed, up  
stairs,  
And the black cat, there, to the  
forest is gone,  
— Look at her, how she glares!"

"Thou little maiden, my heart's own  
bliss,  
Have thou no fear, for I love thee  
well;  
And sweetest it is upon nights like  
this,  
When the wind, like the blast of  
hell,

"Roars up and down in the chim-  
neys old,  
And the wolf howls over the dis-  
tant snow,  
To kiss away both the night and  
the cold  
With such kisses as we kiss now."

"Ah! more than life I love thee,  
dear!"  
Says the little maiden with eyes  
so blue;  
"And, when thou art near, I have  
no fear,  
Whatever the night may do.

"But O, it is dreary when thou art  
away!  
And in bed all night I pray for  
thee:  
Now tell me, thou dearest heart,  
and say,  
Dost thou ever pray for me?"

"Thou little maiden, I thank thee  
much,  
And well I would thou shouldst  
pray for me;  
But I am a sinful man, and such  
As ill should pray for thee."

Hist! . . . was it a face at the win-  
dow past?  
Or was it the ivy leaf, by chance,  
Tapping the pane in the fitful blast  
That startled Lord Rosencrantz?

The little maid, she has seen it plain,  
For she shrieked, and down she  
fell in a swoon:  
Mutely it came, and went again,  
In the light of the winter moon.

\* \* \* \*

The young Queen,—O, but her face  
was sweet!—

She died on the night that she was  
wed:

And they laid her out in her wind-  
ing-sheet,  
Stark on her marriage-bed.

The little maiden, she went mad;  
But her soft blue eyes still smiled  
the same,

With ever that wistful smile they  
had:

Her mother, she died of shame.

The black cat lived from house to  
house,

And every night to the forest  
hied;

And she killed many a rat and  
mouse

Before the day she died.

And do you wish that I should de-  
clare

What was the end of Lord Rosen-  
crantz?

Ah! look in my heart, you will find  
it there,

— The end of the old romance!

### PART III.

#### DAYBREAK.

YES, you have guessed it. The wild  
Rosencrantz,

It is I, dear, the wicked one; who  
but I, maiden?

My life is a tattered and worn-out  
romance,

And my heart with the curse of  
the Past has been laden:

For still, where I wander or linger,  
forever

Comes a skeleton hand that is  
beckoning for me;

And still, dogging my footsteps, life's  
long Never-never

Pursues me, wherever my foot-  
steps may be:

The star of my course hath been long  
ago set, dear;

And the wind is my pilot wher-  
ever he blows:

He cannot blow from me what I  
would forget, dear,

Nor blow to me that which I seek  
for,—repose.

What! if I were the Devil himself,  
would you cling to me,

Bear my ill humors, and share my  
wild nights?

Crouch by me, fear me not, stay by  
me, sing to me,

While the dark haunts us with  
sounds and with sights?

Follow me far away, pine not, but  
smile to me,

Never ask questions, and always  
be gay?

Still the dear eyes meekly turned all  
the while to me,

Watchful thro' night through, and  
patient the day?

What! if this hand, that now strays  
through your tresses,

Three years ago had been dabbled  
in gore?

What! if this lip, that your lip now  
caresses,

A corpse had been pressing but  
three years before?

Well then, behold! . . . 'tis the  
gray light of morning

That breaks o'er the desolate wa-  
ters . . . and hark!

'Tis the first signal shot from my  
boat gives me warning:

The dark moves away: and I fol-  
low the lark.

On with your hat and your cloak!  
you are mine, child,

Mine and the fiend's that pursues  
me, henceforth!

We must be far, ere day breaks, o'er  
the brine, child:

It may be south I go, it may be  
north.

What! really fetching your hat and  
your cloak, dear?

Sweet little fool. Kiss me quick  
now, and laugh!

All I have said to you was but a  
joke, dear:

Half was in folly, in wantonness  
half.

PART IV.

BREAKFAST.

AY, maiden: the whole of my story  
to you

Was but a deception, a silly ro-  
mance:

From the first to the last word, no  
word of it true;

And my name's Owen Meredith,  
not Rosencrantz.

I never was loved by a Queen, I de-  
clare:

And no little maiden for me has  
gone mad:

I never committed a murder, I  
swear;

And I probably should have been  
hanged if I had.

I never have sold to the Devil my  
soul;

And but small is the price he  
would give me, I know:

I live much as other folks live, on  
the whole:

And the worst thing in me's my  
digestion . . . heigh ho!

Let us leave to the night-wind the  
thoughts which he brings,

And leave to the darkness the  
powers of the dark;

For my hopes o'er the sea lightly  
flit, like the wings

Of the curlews that hover and  
poise round my bark.

Leave the wind and the water to  
mutter together

Their weird metaphysical grief, as  
of old.

For day's business begins, and the  
clerk of the weather

To the powers of the air doth his  
purpose unfold.

Be you sure those dread Titans,  
whatever they be,

That sport with this ball in the  
great courts of Time,

To play practical jokes upon you  
dear, and me,

Will never desist from a spot so  
sublime.

The old Oligarchy of Greece, now  
abolished,

Were idle aristocrats fond of the  
arts,

But though thus refined, all their  
tastes were so polished,

They were turbulent, dissolute  
gods, without hearts.

They neglected their business, they  
gave themselves airs,

Read the poets in Greek, sipped  
their wine, took their rest,

Never troubling their beautiful  
heads with affairs,

And as for their morals, the least  
said, the best.

The scandal grew greater and great-  
er: and then

An appeal to the people was for-  
mally made.

The old gods were displaced by the  
suffrage of men,

And a popular government formed  
in their stead.

But these are high matters of state,—  
I and you

May be thankful, meanwhile, we  
have something to eat,

And nothing, just now, more impor-  
tant to do,

Than to sit down at once, and say  
grace before meat.

You may boil me some coffee, an  
egg, if it's handy,

The sea's rolling mountains just  
now. I shall wait

For King Neptune's *mollissima tem-  
pora fandi*,

Who will presently lift up his  
curly white pate,

Bid Eurus and Notus to mind their  
own business,

And make me a speech in Hexa-  
meters slow;

While I, by the honor elated to diz-  
ziness,

Shall yield him my offerings, and  
make him my bow.

#### A DREAM.

I HAD a quiet dream last night :

For I dreamed that I was dead;  
Wrapped around in my grave-clothes  
white,

With my gravestone at my head.

I lay in a land I have not seen,

In a place I do not know,  
And the grass was deathly, deathly  
green  
Which over my grave did grow.

The place was as still as still could be,  
With a few stars in the sky,  
And an ocean whose waves I could  
not see,  
Though I heard them moan hard  
by.

There was a bird in a branch of yew,  
Building a little nest.  
The stars looked far and very few,  
And I lay all at rest.

There came a footstep through the  
grass,  
And a feeling through the mould :  
And a woman pale did over me pass,  
With hair like snakes of gold.

She read my name upon my grave :  
She read my name with a smile.  
A wild moan came from a wandering  
wave,  
But the stars smiled all the while.

The stars smiled soft. That woman  
pale

Over my grave did move,  
Singing all to herself a tale  
Of one that died for love.

There came a sparrow-hawk to the  
tree,

The little bird to slay :  
There came a ship from over the sea  
To take that woman away.

The little bird I wished to save,  
To finish his nest so sweet :  
But so deep I lay within my grave  
That I could not move my feet.

That woman pale I wished to keep  
To finish the tale I heard :  
But within my grave I lay so deep  
That I could not speak a word.

#### KING SOLOMON.

KING Solomon stood, in his crown  
of gold,

Between the pillars, before the  
altar

In the House of the Lord. And the  
King was old,

And his strength began to falter,  
So that he leaned on his ebony staff,  
Sealed with the seal of the Pente-  
graph.

All of the golden fretted work,  
Without and within so rich and  
rare,

As high as the nest of the building  
stork,

Those pillars of cedar were : —  
Wrought up to the brazen chapters  
Of the Sidonian artificers.

And the King stood still as a carven  
king,

The carven cedarn beams below,  
In his purple robe, with his signet-  
ring,

And his beard as white as snow,  
And his face to the Oracle, where  
the hymn

Dies under the wing of the cherubim.

The wings fold over the Oracle,  
And cover the heart and eyes of  
God:

The Spouse with pomegranate, lily,  
and bell,

Is glorious in her abode;  
For with gold of Ophir, and scent of  
myrrh,  
And purple of Tyre, the King clothed  
her.

By the soul of each slumbrous instru-  
ment

Drawn soft through the musical  
misty air,  
The stream of the folk that came  
and went,

For worship, and praise, and  
prayer,

Flowed to and fro, and up and down,  
And round the King in his golden  
crown.

And it came to pass, as the King  
stood there,

And looked on the house he had  
built, with pride,  
That the Hand of the Lord came  
unaware,

And touched him; so that he died,  
In his purple robe, with his signet-  
ring,

And the crown wherewith they had  
crowned him king.

And the stream of the folk that  
came and went

To worship the Lord with prayer  
and praise,

Went softly ever, in wonderment,  
For the King stood there always;  
And it was solemn and strange to  
behold

That dead king crowned with a  
crown of gold.

For he leaned on his ebony staff up-  
right;

And over his shoulders the purple  
robe;

And his hair and his beard were  
both snow-white

And the fear of him filled the  
globe;

So that none dared touch him,  
though he was dead,  
He looked so royal about the head.

And the moons were changed: and  
the years rolled on:

And the new king reigned in the  
old king's stead.

And men were married and buried  
anon;

But the King stood, stark and  
dead;

Leaning upright on his ebony staff;  
Preserved by the sign of the Pente-  
graph.

And the stream of life, as it went  
and came,

Ever for worship and praise and  
prayer,

Was awed by the face, and the fear,  
and the fame

Of the dead king standing there;  
For his hair was so white, and his  
eyes so cold,

That they left him alone with his  
crown of gold.

So King Solomon stood up, dead, in  
the House

Of the Lord, held there by the  
Pentegraph,

Until out from a pillar there ran a  
red mouse,

And gnawed through his ebony  
staff:

Then, flat on his face, the King fell  
down:

And they picked from the dust a  
golden crown.\*

---

\* My knowledge of the Rabbinical legend which suggested this Poem is one among the many debts I owe to my friend Robert Browning. I hope these lines may remind him of hours which his society rendered precious and delightful to me, and which are among the most pleasant memories of my life.

## CORDELIA.

THOUGH thou never hast sought to  
 divine it,  
 Though to know it thou hast not a  
 care,  
 Yet my heart can no longer confine  
 it,  
 Though my lip may be blanched to  
 declare  
 That I love thee, revere thee, adore  
 thee,  
 O my dream, my desire, my despair!  
 Though in life it may never be given  
 To my heart to repose upon thine;  
 Though neither on earth, nor in  
 heaven,  
 May the bliss I have dreamed of be  
 mine;  
 Yet thou canst not forbid me, in  
 distance,  
 And silence, and long lonely years,  
 To love thee, despite thy resistance,  
 And bless thee, despite of my tears.

Ah me, *couldst* thou love me! . . .  
 Believe me,  
 How I hang on the tones of thy voice;  
 How the least sign thou sighest can  
 grieve me,  
 The least smile thou smilest rejoice;  
 In thy face, how I watch every shade  
 there;  
 In thine eyes, how I learn every  
 look;  
 How the least sigh thy spirit hath  
 made there  
 My heart reads, and writes in its  
 book!

And each day of my life my love  
 shapes me  
 From the mien that thou wearest,  
 Beloved.  
 Thou hast not a grace that escapes  
 me,  
 Nor a movement that leaves me un-  
 moved.  
 I live but to see thee, to hear thee;  
 I count but the hours where thou  
 art;

I ask — only ask — to be near thee,  
 Albeit so far from thy heart.

In my life's lonely galleries never  
 Will be silenced thy lightest foot-  
 fall:  
 For it lingers, and echoes, forever  
 Until Memory mourning o'er all.  
 All thy fair little footsteps are  
 bright  
 O'er the dark troubled spirit in me,  
 As the tracts of some sweet water-  
 sprite  
 O'er the heaving and desolate sea.  
 And, though cold and unkind be  
 thine eyes,  
 Yet, unchilled their unkindness be-  
 low,  
 In my heart all its love for thee lies,  
 Like a violet covered by snow.

Little child! . . . were it mine to  
 watch o'er thee,  
 To guide, and to guard, and to  
 soothe;  
 To shape the long pathway before  
 thee,  
 And all that was rugged to smooth;  
 To kneel at one bedside by night,  
 And mingle our souls in one prayer;  
 And, awaked by the same morning-  
 light,  
 The same daily duties to share;

Until Age with his silver dimmed  
 slowly  
 Those dear golden tresses of thine;  
 And Memory rendered thrice holy  
 The love in this poor heart of mine;  
 Ah, never . . . (recalling together,  
 By one hearth, in our life's winter  
 time,  
 Our youth, with its lost summer  
 weather,  
 And our love, in its first golden  
 prime),  
 Should those loved lips have cause  
 to record  
 One word of unkindness from me,  
 Or my heart cease to bless the least  
 word

Of kindness once spoken by thee!  
But, whatever my path, and what-  
ever

The future may fashion for thine,  
Thy life, O believe me, can never,  
My beloved, be indifferent to mine.  
When far from the sight of thy  
beauty,

Pursuing, unaided, alone,  
The path of man's difficult duty  
In the land where my lot may be  
thrown;

When my steps move no more in the  
place

Where thou art: and the brief days  
of yore

Are forgotten: and even my face  
In thy life is remembered no more;  
Yet in *my* life will live thy least  
feature; [eyes]

I shall mourn the lost light of thine  
And on earth there will yet be one  
nature

That must yearn after thine till it  
dies.

"YE SEEK JESUS OF NAZ-  
ARETH WHICH WAS CRU-  
CIFIED: HE IS RISEN: HE IS  
NOT HERE."

MARK xvi. 6.

If Jesus came to earth again,  
And walked, and talked, in field,  
and street,

Who would not lay his human pain  
Low at those heavenly feet?

And leave the loom, and leave the  
lute,

And leave the volume on the  
shelf, [mute]

To follow Him, unquestioning,  
If 'twere the Lord himself?

How many a brow with care o'er-  
worn, [laden]

How many a heart with grief o'er-  
How many a youth with love for-  
lorn,

How many a mourning maiden,

Would leave the baffling earthly  
prize

Which fails the earthly, weak en-  
deavor,

To gaze into those holy eyes,  
And drink content forever!

The mortal hope, I ask with tears  
Of Heaven, to soothe this mortal  
pain,—

The dream of all my darkened  
years,—

I should not cling to them.

The pride that prompts the bitter  
jest—

(Sharp styptic of a bleeding  
heart!)

Would fail, and humbly leave con-  
fest

The sin that brought the smart,

If I might crouch within the fold  
Of that white robe (a wounded  
bird);

The face that Mary saw behold,  
And hear the words she heard.

I would not ask one word of all  
That now my nature yearns to  
know;—

The legend of the ancient Fall;  
The source of human woe:

What hopes in other worlds may  
hide;

What griefs yet unexplored in  
this;

How fares the spirit within the wide  
Waste tract of that abyss

Which scares the heart (since all we  
know

Of life is only conscious sorrow)  
Lest novel life be novel woe

In death's undawned to-morrow;

I would not ask one word of this,  
If I might only hide my head

On that beloved breast, and kiss  
The wounds where Jesus bled.



And I, where'er He went, would go,  
Nor question where the path  
might lead,  
Enough to know that, here below,  
I walked with God indeed!

His sheep along the cool, the shade,  
By the still watercourse he leads,  
His lambs upon His breast are laid,  
His hungry ones He feeds.

Safe in His bosom I should lie,  
Hearing, where'er His steps might  
be,  
Calm waters, murmuring, murmur-  
ing by,  
To meet the mighty sea.

If this be thus, O Lord of mine,  
In absence is Thy love forgot?  
And must I, where I walk, repine  
Because I see Thee not?

If this be thus, if this be thus,  
And our poor prayers yet reach  
Thee, Lord,  
Since we are weak, once more to us  
Reveal the Living Word!

Yet is my heart, indeed, so weak  
My course alone I dare not trace?  
Alas! I know my heart must break  
Before I see Thy face.

I loved, with all my human soul,  
A human creature, here below,  
And, though thou bad'st thy sea to  
roll  
Forever 'twixt us two,

And though her form I may not see  
Through all my long and lonely  
life,  
And though she never now may be  
My helpmate and my wife,

Yet in my dreams her dear eyes  
shine,  
Yet in my heart her face I bear,  
And yet each holiest thought of  
mine  
I seem with her to share.

But, Lord, Thy face I never saw,  
Nor ever heard Thy human voice:  
My life, beneath an iron law,  
Moves on without my choice.

No memory of a happier time,  
When in Thine arms, perchance, I  
slept,  
In some lost ante-natal clime,  
My mortal frame hath kept:

And all is dark — before — behind.  
I cannot reach Thee, where thou  
art,

I cannot bring Thee to my mind,  
Nor clasp Thee to my heart.

And this is why, by night and day,  
Still with so many an unseen tear  
These lonely lips have learned to  
pray

That God would spare me here,

While yet my doubtful course I go  
Along the vale of mortal years,  
By life's dull stream, that will not  
flow

As fast as flow my tears,

One human hand, my hand to take:  
One human heart, my own to  
raise:

One loving human voice, to break  
The silence of my days.

Saviour, if this wild prayer be  
wrong,

And what I seek I may not find,  
O, make more hard, and stern, and  
strong,

The framework of my mind!

Or, nearer to me, in the dark  
Of life's low hours, one moment  
stand,

And give me keener eyes to mark  
The moving of Thy hand.

#### TO CORDELIA.

I DO not blame thee, that my life  
Is lonelier now than even before;  
For hadst thou been, indeed, my  
wife,

(Vain dream that cheats no more!)

The fate, which from my earliest  
years [tread,  
Hath made so dark the path I  
Had taught thee too, perchance,  
such tears

As I have learned to shed.

And that fixed gloom, which souls  
like mine

Are schooled to wear with stub-  
born pride,

Had cast too dark a shade o'er  
thine, —

Hadst thou been by my side.

I blame thee not, that thou shouldst  
flee

From paths where only weeds  
have sprung,

Though loss of thee is loss to me  
Of all that made youth young.

For 'tis not mine, and 'twas not  
thine,

To shape our course as first we  
strove :

And powers which I could not com-  
bine

Divide me from thy love.

Alas! we cannot choose our lives, —  
We can but bear the burthen  
given.

In vain the feverish spirit strives  
With unrelenting heaven.

For who can bid those tyrant stars  
The injustice of their laws repeal?

Why ask who makes our prison bars,  
Since they are made of steel?

The star that rules my darkened  
hour

Is fixt in reachless spheres on  
high :

The curse which foils my baffled  
power

Is scrawled across the sky.

My heart knows all it felt, and feels :  
But more than this I shall not  
know,

Till he that made the heart reveals  
Why mine must suffer so.

I only know that, never yet,  
My life hath found what others  
find, —

That peace of heart which will not  
fret

The fibres of the mind.

I only know that not for me

The human love, the clasp, the  
kiss;

My love in other worlds must be, —  
Why was I born in this?

The bee is framed to find her food  
In every wayside flower and bell,

And build within the hollow wood  
Her own ambrosial cell :

The spider hath not learned her art,  
A home in ruined towers to spin;

But what it seeks, my heart, my  
heart

Is all unskilled to win.

The world was filled, ere I was born,  
With man and maid, with bower  
and brake,

And nothing but the barren thorn  
Remained for me to take :

I took the thorn, I wove it round,  
I made a piercing crown to wear :

My own sad hands myself have  
crowned,

Lord of my own despair.

That which we are, we are. 'Twere  
vain

To plant with toil what will not  
grow.

The cloud will break, and bring the  
rain,

Whether we reap or sow.

I cannot turn the thunder-blast,  
Nor pluck the levin's lurid root ;

I cannot change the changeless past,  
Nor make the ocean mute.

And if the bolt of death must fall  
Where, bare of head I walk my  
way,

Why let it fall! I will not call  
To bid the Thunderer stay.

'Tis much to know, whate'er betide  
The pilgrim path I pace alone,  
*Thou* wilt not miss me from thy side  
When its brief course is done.

Hadst thou been mine, — when skies  
were drear

And waves were rough, for thy  
sweet sake

I should have found in all some fear  
My inmost breast to shake :

But now, his fill the blast may blow,  
The sea may rage, the thunder  
roll,

For every path by which I go  
Will reach the self-same goal.

Too proud to fly, too weak to cope,  
I yet will wait, nor bow my head.  
Those who have nothing left to hope,  
Have nothing left to dread.

#### A LETTER TO CORDELIA.

PERCHANCE, on earth, I shall not  
see thee ever

Ever again: and my unwritten  
years

Are signed out by that desolating  
"Never,"

And blurred with tears.

'Tis hard, so young — so young as I  
am still,

To feel forevermore from life  
depart

All that can flatter the poor human  
will,

Or fill the heart.

Yet there was nothing in that sweet,  
and brief,

And perisht intercourse, now  
closed for me,

To add one thought unto my bitter-  
est grief

Upbraiding thee.

'Tis somewhat to have known, al-  
beit in vain,

One woman in this sorrowful bad  
earth,

Whose very loss can yet bequeath  
to pain  
New faith in worth.

If I have overrated, in the wild  
Blind heat of hope, the sense of  
aught which hath

From the lost vision of thy beauty  
smiled

On my lone path,

My retribution is, that to the last  
I have o'errated, too, my power to  
cope

With this fierce thought . . . that  
life must all be past

Without life's hope;

And I would bless the chance which  
let me see

Once more the comfort of thy face,  
although

It were with beauty never born for  
me

That face should glow.

To see thee — all thou wilt be — loved  
and loving —

Even though another's — in the  
years to come —

To watch, once more, thy gracious  
sweetness moving

Through its pure home, —

Even this would seem less desolate,  
less drear,

Than never, never to behold thee  
more —

Never on those beloved lips to hear  
The voice of yore!

These weak words, O my friend, fell  
not more fast

Than the weak scalding tears that  
with them fell.

Nor tears, nor words came, when I  
saw thee last . . .

Enough! . . . Farewell.

Farewell. If that dread Power  
which fashioned man

To till this planet, free to search  
and find

The secret of his source as best he  
can,  
In his own mind,

Hath any care, apart from that  
which moves  
Earth's myriads through Time's  
ages as they roll,  
For any single human life, or loves  
One separate soul,

May He, whose wisdom portions out  
for me  
The moonless, changeless mid-  
night of the heart,  
Still all his softest sunshine save for  
thee,  
Where'er thou art:

And if, indeed, not any human eyes  
From human tears be free,— may  
Sorrow bring  
Only to thee her April-rain, whose  
sighs  
Soothe flowers in Spring.

#### FAILURE.

I HAVE seen those that wore Heav-  
en's armor worsted :  
I have heard Truth lie :  
Seen Life, beside the founts for  
which it thirsted,  
Curse God and die :

I have felt the hand, whose touch  
was rapture, braiding  
Among my hair  
Love's choicest flowerets, and have  
found how fading  
Those garlands were :

I have watched my first and holiest  
hopes depart,  
One after one :  
I have held the hand of Death upon  
my heart,  
And made no moan :

I have seen her whom life's whole  
sacrifice  
Was made to keep,

Pass coldly by me with a stranger's  
eyes,  
Yet did not weep :

Now even my body fails me; and  
my brow  
Aches night and day :  
I am weak with over-work : how  
can I now  
Go forth and play?

What! now that Youth's forgotten  
aspirations  
Are all no more,  
Rest there, indeed, all Youth's glad  
recreations,  
— An untried store?

Alas, what skills this heart of sad  
experience,  
This frame o'erwrought,  
This memory with life's motion all  
at variance,  
This aching thought?

How shall I come, with these, to  
follow pleasure  
Where others find it?  
Will not their sad steps mar the  
merriest measure,  
Or lag behind it?

Still must the man move sadder for  
the dreams  
That mocked the boy :  
And, having failed to achieve, must  
still, it seems,  
Fail to enjoy.

It is no common failure, to have  
failed  
Where man hath given  
A whole life's effort to the task as-  
sailed —  
Spent earth on heaven.

If error and if failure enter here,  
What helps repentance?  
Remember this, O Lord, in thy se-  
vere  
Last sentence!

## MISANTHROPOS.

Παντα κονις και παντα γελως και παντα το  
μηδεν.

DAY's last light is dying out.  
All the place grows dim and drear:  
See! the grisly bat's about.  
There is nothing left to fear;  
Little left to doubt.

Not a note of music flits  
O'er the slackened harpstrings  
yonder

From the skeleton that sits  
By the broken harp, to ponder  
(While the spider knits

Webs in each black socket-hole)  
Where is all the music fled.

Music, hath it, then, a goal? . . .  
Broken harp, and brainless head!  
Silent song and soul!

Not a light in yonder sky,  
Save that single wicked star,  
Leering with its wanton eye  
Through the shattered window-  
bar;

Come to see me die!

All, save this, the monstrous night  
Hath erased and blotted bare  
As the fool's brain . . . God's last  
light

Winking at the Fiend's work  
there, —

Wrong made worse by right!

Gone the voice, the face, of yore!  
Gone the dream of golden hair!  
Gone the garb that Falsehood wore!  
Gone the shame of being bare!  
We may close the door.

All the guests are slunk away.  
Not a footstep on the stairs!

Not a friend here, left to say  
"Amen" to a sinner's prayers,  
If he cared to pray!

Gone is Friendship's friendliness,  
After Love's fidelity:

Gone is Honor in the mess  
Spat upon by Charity:  
Faith has fled Distress.

Those grim tipstaves at the gate  
Freely may their work begin.  
Let them in! they shall not wait.  
There is little now within  
Left for Scorn and Hate.

O, no doubt the air is foul!  
'Tis the last lamp spits and stinks,  
Shuddering downward in the bowl  
Of the socket, from the brinks.  
What's a burned-out soul?

Let them all go, unreprieved!  
For the source of tears is dried.  
What! . . . One rests? . . . hath  
nothing moved

That pale woman from my side,  
Whom I never loved?

You, with those dim eyes of yours,  
Sadder than all eyes save mine!  
That dim forehead which immures  
Such faint helpless griefs, that  
pine

For such hopeless cures!

Must you love me, spite of loathing?  
Can't you leave me where I'm  
lying?

O, . . . you wait for our betrothing?  
I escape you, though, — by dying!  
Lay out my death-clothing.

Well I would that your white face  
Were abolisht out of sight,  
With the glory and the grace  
Swallowed long ago in night, —  
Gone, — without a trace!

Reach me down my golden harp.  
Set it here, beside my knee.  
Never fear that I shall warp  
All the chords of ecstasy,  
Striking them too sharp!

Crown me with my crown of flowers,  
Faded roses every one!  
Plucked in those long-perisht bowers  
By the nightshade overrun,  
Fit for brows like ours!

Fill me, now, my golden cup.  
Pour the black wine to the brim  
Till within me, while I sup,

All the fires, long quenched and dim,  
Flare, one moment, up.

I will sing you a last song.

I will pledge you a last health . . .  
Here's to weakness seeming strong!  
Here's to Want that follows  
Wealth!

Here's to Right gone wrong!

Curse me now the Oppressor's rod,  
And the meanness of the weak;  
And the fool that apes the nod;  
And the world at hide and seek  
With the wrath of God.

Dreams of man's unvalued good,  
By mankind's unholy means!  
Curse the people in their mud!  
And the wicked Kings and Queens,  
Lying by the Rood.

Fill! to every plague . . . and first,  
Love, that breeds its own decay;  
Rotten, ere the blossom burst.  
Next, the friend that slinks away,  
When you need him worst.

O the world's inhuman ways!  
And the heartless social lie!  
And the coward, cheapening praise!  
And the patience of the sky,  
Lighting such bad days!

Curséd be the heritage  
Of the sins we have not sinned!  
Curséd be this boasting age,  
And the blind that lead the blind  
O'er its creaking stage!

O the vice within the blood,  
And the sin within the sense!  
And the fallen angelhood,  
With its yearnings, too immense  
To be understood!

Curse the hound with beaten hide,  
When he turns and licks the  
hand.

Curse this woman at my side!  
And the memory of the land  
Where my first love died.

Curséd be the next and most  
(With whatever curse most kills),  
Me . . . the man whose soul is lost;  
Fouled by each of all these ills, —  
Filled with death and dust!

Take away the harp of gold,  
And the empty wine-cup too.

Lay me out: for I grow cold.  
There is something dim in view,  
Which must pass untold: —  
Something dim, and something  
vast, —

Out of reach of all I say.  
Language ceases . . . husht, aghast  
What am I, to curse or pray?  
God succeeds at last!

## BOOK VI.—PALINGENESIS.

### A PRAYER.

My Saviour, dare I come to Thee,  
Who let the little children come?  
But I? . . . my soul is faint in me!  
I come from wandering to and fro  
This weary world. There still his  
round  
The Accuser goes: but Thee I  
found

Not anywhere. Both joy and woe  
Have passed me by. I am too weak  
To grieve or smile. And yet I know  
That tears lie deep in all I do.  
The homeless that are sick for home  
Are not so wretched. Ere it break,  
Receive my heart; and for the sake,  
Not of my sorrows, but of Thine,  
Bend down Thy holy eyes on mine,  
Which are too full of misery

To see Thee clearly, though they seek.

Yet, if I heard Thy voice say . . .  
"Come,"

So might I, dying, die near Thee.  
It shames me not, to have passed by  
The temple-doors in every street  
Where men profaned Thee: but  
that I

Have left neglected, choked with  
weeds,  
Defrauded of its incense sweet  
From holy thoughts and loyal  
deeds,

The fane thou gavest me to en-  
shrine  
Thee in, this wretched heart of  
mine.

The Satyr there hath entered in;  
The Owl that loves the darkened  
hour;

And obscene shapes of night and sin  
Still haunt, where God designed a  
bower

For angels.

Yet I will not say

How oft I have aspired in vain,  
How toiled along the rugged way,  
And held my faith above my pain,  
For this Thou knowest. Thou  
knowest when

I faltered, and when I was strong;  
And how from that of other men  
My fate was different: all the  
wrong

Which devastated hope in me:  
The ravaged years; the excited  
heart,

That found in pain its only part  
Of love: the master misery  
That shattered all my early years,  
From which, in vain, I sought to  
flee:

Thou knowest the long repentant  
tears,

Thou heard'st me cry against the  
spheres,

So sharp my anguish seemed to be!  
All this Thou knowest. Though I  
should keep

Silence, Thou knowest my hands  
were free

From sin, when all things cried to  
me

To sin. Thou knowest that, had I  
rolled

My soul in hell-flame fifty-fold,  
My sorrow could not be more deep.  
Lord! there is nothing hid from  
Thee.

### EUTHANASIA.

(WRITTEN AFTER A SEVERE ILLNESS.)

SPRING to the world, and strength  
to me, returns;

And flowers return, — but not the  
flowers I knew.

I live: the fire of life within me  
burns;

But all my life is dead. The land  
I view

I know not; nor the life which I re-  
gain.

Within the hollow of the hand of  
death

I have lain so long, that now I  
draw the breath

Of life as unfamiliar, and with pain

Of life: but not the life which is no  
more; —

That tender, tearful, warm, and  
passionate thing;

That wayward, restless, wistful life  
of yore;

Which now lies, cold, beneath the  
clasp of Spring,

As last year's leaves: but such a life  
as seems

A strange new-comer, coy and all  
afraid.

No motion leaves the heart where  
it is laid,

Save when the past returns to me in  
dreams.

In dreams, like memories of another  
world:

The beauty, and the passion, and  
the pain,

The wizardry by which my youth  
was whirled

Round vain desires, — so violent,  
yet so vain!

The love which desolated life, yet  
made

So dear its desolation: and the  
creeds

Which, one by one, snapped in  
my hold like reeds,

Beneath the weight of need upon  
them laid!

For each man dreams his own sand-  
house secure

While life's wild waves are lulled;  
yet who can say,

If yet his faith's foundations do  
endure,

It is not that no wind hath blown  
that way?

Must we even for their beauty's sake,  
keep furled

Our fairest creeds, lest earth should  
sully them,

And take what ruder help chance  
sends, to stem

The rubs and wrenchings of this  
boisterous world?

Alas! 'tis not the creed that saves  
the man:

It is the man that justifies the  
creed:

And each must save his own soul as  
he can,

Since each is burthened with a  
different need.

Round each the bandit passions  
lurk; and, fast

And furious, swarm to strip the  
pilgrim bare;

Then, oft, in lonely places un-  
aware,

Fall on him, and do murder him at  
last.

And oft the light of truth, which  
through the dark

We fetched such toilful compass  
to detect,

Glares through the broken cloud on  
the lost bark,

And shows the rock — too late,  
when all is wrecked!

Not from one watch-tower o'er the  
deep, alone,

It streams, but lightens there and  
lightens here

With lights so numberless (like  
heaven's eighth sphere)

That all their myriad splendors  
seem but one.

Time was, when it seemed possible  
to be

(Then, when this shattered prow  
first felt the foam)

Columbus to some far Philosophy,  
And bring, perchance, the golden

Indies home.

O sireu isles of the enchanted main  
Through which I lingered! altars,

temples, groves,

Whelmed in the salt sea wave, that  
rolls and roves

Around each desolated lost domain!

Over all these hath passed the  
deluge. And,

Saved from the sea, forlornly  
face to face

With the gaunt ruin of a world, I  
stand.

But two alone of all that perisht  
race

Survive to share with me my wan-  
derings;

Doubt and Experience. These  
my steps attend,

Ever; and oft above my harp they  
bend,

And, weeping with me, weep among  
its strings.

Yet, — saved, though in a land un-  
consecrate

By any memory, it seems good to  
me

To build an altar to the Lord; and  
wait

Some token, either from the land  
or sea,



To point me to my rest, which  
should be near.

Rude is the work, and simple is  
my skill;

Yet, if the hand could answer to  
the will,

This pile should lack not incense.  
Father, hear

My cry unto thee. Make thy cov-  
enant

Fast with my spirit. Bind within  
Thy bow

The whole horizon of my tears. I  
pant

For Thy refreshing. Bid Thy  
fountains flow

In this dry desert, where no springs  
I see.

Before I venture in an unknown  
land,

Here will I clear the ground on  
which I stand,

And justify the hope Thou gavest  
me.

I cannot make quite clear what  
comes and goes

In fitful light, by waning gleams  
descried.

The Spirit, blowing where it listeth,  
blows

Only at times, some single fold  
aside

Of that great veil which hangs o'er  
the Unknown:

Yet do the feeble, fleeting lights  
that fall,

Reveal enough, in part, for hope  
in all:

And that seems surest which the  
least is shown.

God is a spirit. It is also said  
Man is a spirit. Can I therefore

deem

The two in nature separate? The  
made

Hath in it of the Maker. Hence I  
seem

A step towards light; — since 'tis  
the property

Of spirit to possess itself in all  
It is possess'd by; — halved yet in-  
tegral;

One person, various personality.

To say the Infinite is that which lies  
Beyond the Finite, . . . were it  
not to set

A border mark to the immensities?  
Far as these mortal senses measure  
yet

Their little region of the mighty  
plan,

Through valves of birth and death  
— are heard forever

The finite steps of infinite en-  
deavor

Moving through Nature and the  
mind of man.

If man, — the finite spirit, — in in-  
finity

Alone can find the truth of his  
ideal,

Dare I not deem that infinite Div-  
inity

Within the finite must assume the  
real?

For what so feverish fancy, reckless  
hurled

Through a ruined brain, did ever  
yet descry

A symbol sad enough to signify  
The conscious God of an unconscious  
world?

Wherefore, thus much perceived, to  
recognize

In God, the infinite spirit of Unity,  
In man, the finite spirit, here implies

An interchanged perception; —  
Deity

Within humanity made manifest:  
Not here man lonely, there a lonely  
God;

But, in all paths by human nature  
trod,

Infinity in Finitude exprest.

This interchange, upon man's part,  
I call

Religion: revelation on the part

Of Deity: wherefrom there seems  
to fall

'Tis consequence (the point from  
which I start)

If God and man be one (a unity  
Of which religion is the human  
side)

This must in man's religion be  
descried,

A consciousness and a reality.

Whilst man in nature dwells, his  
God is still

In nature; thence, in time, there  
intervenes

The Law: he learns to fortify his  
will

Against his passions, by external  
means:

And God becomes the Lawgiver:  
but when

Corruption in the natural state  
we see,

And in the legal hopeless tyranny,

We seem to need (if needed not till  
then)

That which doth uplift nature, and  
yet makes

More light the heavy letter of the  
law.

Then for the Perfect the Imperfect  
aches,

Till love is born upon the deeps  
of awe.

Yet what of this, . . . that God in  
man may be,

And man, though mortal, of a  
race divine,

If no assurance lives which may  
incline

The heart of man to man's divinity?

"There is no God" . . . the Fool  
saith—to his *heart*,

Yet shapes a godhead from his  
*intellect*.

Is mind than heart less human, . . .  
that we part

Thought from affection, and from  
mind erect

A deity merely intellectual?

If God there be, devoid of sym-  
pathy

For man, he is not man's divinity.

A God unloving were no God at all.

This felt, . . . I ask not . . . "What  
is God?" but "What

Are my relations with Him?"  
this alone

Concerns me now: since, if I know  
this not,

Though I should know the sources  
of the sun,

Or what within the hot heart of the  
earth . . .

Lulls the soft spirit of the fire,  
although

The mandate of the thunder I  
should know,

To me my knowledge would be  
nothing worth.

What message, or what messenger  
to man?

Whereby shall revelation reach  
the soul?

For who, by searching, finds out  
God? How can

My utmost steps, unguided, gain  
the goal

Of necessary knowledge? It is clear  
I cannot reach the gates of heaven,  
and knock

And enter: though I stood upon  
the rock

Like Moses, God must speak ere I  
can hear,

And touch me ere I feel him. He  
must come

To me (I cannot join Him in the  
cloud), [home;

Stand at the dim doors of my mortal

Lift the low latch of life; and  
enter, bowed

Unto this earthly roof; and sit  
within [hearth

The circle of the senses; at the  
Of the affections; be my guest  
on earth,

Loving my love, and sorrowing in  
my sin.

<p>Since, though I stripped Divinity,  in thought,  From passion, which is person-  ality,  My God would still be human:  though I sought  In the bird's wing or in the in-  sect's eye,  Rather than in this broken heart of  mine,  His presence, human still: human  would be  All human thought conceives.  Humanity,  Being less human, is not more divine.  The soul, then, cannot stipulate or  refuse [bassy.  The fashion of the heavenly em-  Since God is here the speaker, He  must choose  The words He wills. Already I  descry  That God and man are one, divided  here,  Yet reconcilable. One doubt sur-  vives.  There is a dread condition to  men's lives:  We die: and, from its death, it  would appear  Our nature is not one with the  divine.  Not so. The Man-God dies; and  by his death  Doth with his own immortal life  combine  The spirit pining in this mortal  breath. [ate  Who from himself himself did alien-  That he, returning to himself,  might pave  A pathway hence, to heaven from  the grave,  For man to follow—through the  heavenly gate.  Wert thou, my Christ, not ignorant  of grief?  A man of sorrows? Not for sor-  row's sake</p>	<p>(Lord, I believe: help thou mine  unbelief!)  Beneath the thorns did thy pure  forehead ache:  But that in sorrow only, unto sor-  row,  Can comfort come; in manhood  only, man  Perceive man's destiny. In Na-  ture's plan  Our path is over Midnight to To-  morrow.  And so the Prince of Life, in dying,  gave  Undying life to mortals. Once  he stood  Among his fellows, on this side the  grave,  A man, perceptible to flesh and  blood:  Now, taken from our sight, he dwells  no less  Within our mortal memory and  thought;  The mystery of all he was, and  wrought,  Is made a part of general conscious-  ness.  And in this consciousness I reach  repose.  Spent with the howling main and  desert sand  Almost too faint to pluck the unfad-  ing rose  Of peace, that bows its beauty to  my hand.  Here Reason fails, and leaves me;  my pale guide  Across the wilderness—by a stern  command,  Shut out, like Moses, from the  Promist Land.  Touching its own achievement, it  hath died.  Ah yet! I have but wrung the vic-  tory  From Thought! Not passionless  will be my path.</p>
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Yet on my life's pale forehead I can  
 see  
 The flush of squandered fires.  
 Passion hath  
 Yet, in the purpose of my days, its  
 place.  
 But changed in aspect: turned  
 unto the East,  
 Whence grows the dayspring from  
 on high, at least  
 A finer fervor trembles on its face.

### THE SOUL'S SCIENCE.

CAN History prove the truth which  
 hath  
 Its record in the silent soul?  
 Or mathematics mete the path  
 Whereby the spirit seeks its goal?

Can Love of aught but Love inherit  
 The blessing which is born of  
 Love?

The spirit knoweth of the spirit:  
 The soul alone the soul can prove.

The eye to see: the ear to hear:  
 The working hand to help the  
 will:

To every sense his separate sphere:  
 And unto each his several skill.

The ear to sight, the eye to sound,  
 Is callous: unto each is given  
 His lorddom in his proper bound.  
 The soul, the soul to find out  
 heaven!

There is a glory veiled to sight;  
 A voice which never ear hath  
 heard;

There is a law no hand can write,  
 Yet stronger than the written  
 word.

And hast thou tidings for my soul,  
 O teacher? to my soul intrust  
 Alone the purport of thy scroll:  
 Or vex me not with learn'd dust.

### A PSALM OF CONFESSION.

FULL soon doth Sorrow make her  
 covenant

With Life; and leave her shadow  
 in the door:

And all those future days, for which  
 we pant,

Do come in mourning for the days  
 of yore.

Still through the world gleams  
 Memory seeking Love,

Pale as the torch which grieving  
 Ceres bore,

Seeking Proserpina, on that dark  
 shore

Where only phantoms through the  
 twilight move.

The more we change, the more is  
 all the same,

Our last grief was a tale of other  
 years

Quite outworn, till to our own hearts  
 it came.

Wishes are pilgrims to the Vale  
 of Tears.

Our brightest joys are but as airy  
 shapes

Of cloud, that fade on evening's  
 glimmering slope;

And disappointment hawks the  
 hovering hope

Forever pecking at the painted  
 grapes.

Why can we not one moment pause,  
 and cherish

Love, though love turn to tears?  
 or for hope's sake

Bless hope, albeit the thing we hope  
 may perish?

For happiness is not in what we  
 take,

But what we give. What matter  
 though the thing

We cling to most should fail us?  
 dust to dust,

It is the *feeling* for the thing,—  
 the trust

In beauty somewhere, to which  
 souls should cling.

My youth has failed, if failure lies  
in aught  
The warm heart dreams, or which  
the working hand  
Is set to do. I have failed in aid-  
less thought,  
And steadfast purpose, and in  
self-command.  
I have failed in hope, in health, in  
love: failed in the word,  
And in the deed too I have failed.  
Ah yet,  
Albeit with eyes from recent  
weepings wet,  
Sing thou, my Soul, thy psalm unto  
the Lord!

The burthen of the desert and the  
sea! [vale!  
The burthen of the vision in the  
My threshing-floor, my threshing-  
floor! ah me,  
Thy wind hath strewn my corn,  
and spoiled the flail!  
The burthen of Dumah and of Ded-  
anin!  
What of the night, O watchman,  
of the night?  
The glory of Kedar faileth: and  
the might  
Of mighty morning is minished and dim.  
The morning cometh, and the night,  
he cries.  
The watchman cries the morning,  
too, is nigher.  
And, if ye would inquire, lift up  
your eyes,  
Inquire of the Lord, return, in-  
quire!  
I stand upon the watchtower all day  
long: [ward.  
And all the night long I am set in  
Is it thy feet upon the mountains,  
- Lord?  
I sing against the darkness: hear  
my song.

The majesty of Kedar hath been  
spoiled:  
Bound are the arrows: broken is  
the bow.

I come before the Lord with gar-  
ments soiled.  
The ashes of my life are on my  
brow.  
Take thou thy harp, and go about  
the city.  
O daughter of Desire, with gar-  
ments torn:  
Sing many songs, wake melody  
and mourn,  
That thou may'st be remembered  
unto pity.

Just, awful God! here at thy feet I  
lay  
My life's most precious offering:  
dearly bought,  
Thou knowest with what toil by  
night and day:  
Thou knowest the pain, the pas-  
sion, and the thought.  
I bring thee my youth's failure. I  
have spelt  
My youth upon it. All I have is  
here.  
Were it worth all it is not, price  
more dear  
Could I have paid for its accom-  
plishment?

Yet it is much. If I could say to  
thee,  
"Acquit me, Judge; for I am  
thus, and thus;  
And have achieved — even so much,"  
— should I be  
Thus wholly fearless and impetu-  
ous  
To rush into thy presence? I might  
weigh  
The little done against the undone  
much:  
My merit with thy mercy: and,  
as such,  
Haggle with pardon for a price to  
pay.

But now the fulness of its failure  
makes  
My spirit fearless; and despair  
grows bold.

My brow, beneath its sad self-knowledge, aches.

Life's presence passes Thine a thousand-fold  
In contemplated terror. Can I lose  
Aught by that desperate temerity  
Which leaves no choice but to  
surrender Thee

My life without condition? Could  
I choose

A stipulated sentence, I might ask  
For ceded dalliance to some cher-  
ished vice;

Or half-remission of some desper-  
ate task:

Now, all I have is hateful. What  
is the price?

Speak, Lord! I hear the Fiend's  
hand at the door.

Hell's slavery or heaven's service  
is it the choice?

How can I palter with the terms?  
O voice,

Whence do I hear thee . . . "Go:  
and sin no more"?

No more, no more? But I have  
kist dead white

The cheek of Vice. No more the  
harlot hides

Her loathsomeness of lineament  
from my sight.

No more within my bosom there  
abides

Her poisoned perfume. O, the  
witch's mice

Have eat her scarlet robe and  
diaper,

And she fares naked! Part from  
her — from her?

Is this the price, O Lord, is this the  
price?

Yet, though her web be broken,  
bonds, I know,

Slow custom frames in the strong  
forge of time,

Which outlast love, and will not  
wear with woe,

Nor break beneath the cognizance  
of crime.

The witch goes bare. But he, —  
the father fiend,

That roams the unthrifty furrows  
of my days,

Yet walks the field of life; and,  
where he strays,

The husbandry of heaven for hell is  
gleaned.

Lulls are there in man's life which  
are not peace.

Tumults which are not triumphs.  
Do I take

The pause of passion for the fiend's  
decease?

This frost of grief hath numbed  
the drowsing snake;

Which yet may wake, and sting me  
in the heat

Of new emotions. What shall  
bar the door

Against the old familiar, that of  
yore

Came without call, and sat within  
my seat?

When evening brings its dim grim  
hour again,

And hell lets loose its dusky brood  
awhile,

Shall I not find him in the darkness  
then?

The same subservient and yet in-  
solent smile?

The same indifferent ignominious  
face?

The same old sense of household  
horror, come

Like a tame creature, back into  
its home?

Meeting me, haply, in my wonted  
place,

With the loathed freedom of an  
unloved mate,

Or crouching on my pillow as of  
old?

Knowing I hate him, impotent in  
hate!

Therefore more subtle, strenuous  
and bold.

Thus ancient habit will usurp young  
will,

And each new effort rivet the old  
thrall.

No matter! those who climb must  
count to fall,

But each new fall will prove them  
climbing still.

O wretched man! the body of this  
death

Which, groaning in the spirit, I  
yet bear [breath

On to the end (so that I breathe the  
Of its corruption, even though  
breathing prayer),

What shall take from me? Must I  
drag forever

The cold corpse of the life which  
I have killed,

But cannot bury? Must my heart  
be filled

With the dry dust of every dead en-  
deavor?

For often, at the mid of the long  
night,

Some devil enters into the dead  
clay,

And gives it life unnatural in my  
sight. [away,

The dead man rises up; and roams  
Back to the mouldered mansions of  
the Past:

And lights a lurid revel in the halls  
Of vacant years; and lifts his  
voice, and calls,

Till troops of phantoms gather round  
him fast.

Frail gold-haired corpses, in whose  
eyes there lives

A strange regret too wild to let  
them rest:

Crowds of pale maidens, who were  
never wives,

And infants that all died upon the  
breast [revelry

That suckled them. And these make  
Mingled with wailing all the mid-  
night through,

Till the sad day doth with stern  
light renew

The toiling land, and the complain-  
ing sea.

Full well I know that in this world  
of ours

The dreadful Commonplace suc-  
ceeds all change;

We catch at times a gleam of flying  
powers

That pass in storm some windy  
mountain range:

But, while we gaze, the cloud returns  
o'er all.

And each, to guide him up the  
devious height,

Must take, and bless, whatever  
earthly light

From household hearths, or shep-  
herd fires, may fall.

This wave, that groans and writhes  
upon the beach,

To-morrow will submit itself to  
calm; [of reach,

That wind that rushes, moaning, out  
Will die anon beneath some breath-  
less palm;

These tears, these sighs, these mo-  
tions of the soul,

This inexpressible pining of the  
mind,

The stern indifferent laws of life  
shall bind,

And fix forever in their old control.

Behold this half-tamed universe of  
things!

That cannot break, nor wholly  
bear, its chain.

Its heart by fits grows wild: it leaps,  
it springs;

Then the chain galls, and kennels  
it again.

If man were formed with all his  
faculties

For sorrow, I should sorrow for  
him less. [stress

Considering a life so brief, the  
Of its short passion I might well  
despise.

<p>But all man's faculties are for delight;          But all man's life is compassed          with what seems          Framed for enjoyment: but from          all that sight          And sense reveal a magic murmur          streams          Into man's heart, which says, or          seems to say,          "Be happy!" . . . and the heart          of man replies,          "Leave happiness to brutes: I          would be wise:          Give me, not peace, but science,          glory, art."          Therefore, age, sickness, and mortality          [pain:          Are but the lightest portion of his          Therefore, shut out from joy, incessantly          Death finds him toiling at a task          that's vain. [have:          I weep the want of all he pines to          I weep the loss of all he leaves          behind:—          Contentment, and repose, and          peace of mind,          Pawned for the purchase of a little          grave:          I weep the hundred centuries of          time;          I weep the millions that have          squandered them          In error, doubt, anxiety, and crime,          Here, where the free birds sing          from leaf and stem:          I weep . . . but what are tears?          What I deplore          I knew not, half a hundred years          ago:          And half a hundred years from          hence, I know          That what I weep for I shall know          no more.          The spirit of that wild and leafless          wind          That wanders o'er the uncom-          panioned sea,</p>	<p>Searching for what it never seem-          to find,          Stirred in my hair, and moved my          heart in me,          To follow it, far over land and main:          And everywhere over this earth's          scarred face          The footsteps of a God I seemed          to trace;          But everywhere steps of a God in          pain.          If, haply, he that made this heart of          mine,          Himself in sorrow walked the          world erewhile,          What then am I, to marvel or repine          That I go mourning ever in the          smile          Of universal nature, searching ever          The phantom of a joy which here          I miss?          My heart inhabits other worlds          than this.          Therefore my search is here a vain          endeavor.          Methought, . . . (it was the mid-          night of my soul,          Dead midnight) that I stood on          Calvary:          I found the cross, but not the Christ.          The whole          Of heaven was dark: and I went          bitterly          Weeping, because I found him not.          Methought, . . .          (It was the twilight of the dawn          and mist)          I stood before the sepulchre of          Christ:          The sepulchre was vacant, void of          aught          Saving the cere-clothes of the grave,          which were          Upfolden straight and empty:          bitterly          Weeping I stood, because not even          there          I found him. Then a voice spake          unto me,</p>
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' Whom seekest thou? Why is thy heart dismayed?

Jesus of Nazareth, he is not here: Behold, the Lord is risen. Be of cheer:

Approach, behold the place where he was laid."

And while he spake, the sunrise smote the world.

"Go forth, and tell thy brethren," spake the voice:

'The Lord is risen.'" Suddenly unfurled,

The whole unclouded Orient did rejoice

In glory. Wherefore should I mourn that here

My heart feels vacant of what most it needs?

Christ is risen! . . . the cereclothes and the weeds

That wrapped him lying in his sepulchre

Of earth, he hath abandoned; being gone

Back into heaven, where we too must turn

Our gaze to find him. Pour, O risen Sun

Of Righteousness, the light for which I yearn

Upon the darkness of this mortal hour,

This track of night in which I walk forlorn:

Behold the night is now far spent. The morn

Breaks, breaking from afar through a night shower.

### REQUIESCAT.

I SOUGHT to build a deathless monument

To my dead love. Therein I meant to place

All precious things, and rare: as Nature blent

All single sweetness in one sweet face.

I could not build it worthy her mute merit,

Nor worthy her white brows and holy eyes,

Nor worthy of her perfect and pure spirit,

Nor of my own immortal memories.

But as some wrapt artificer of old,

To enshrine the ashes of a virgin saint,

Might scheme to work with ivory, and fine gold,

And carven gems, and legended and quaint

Seraphic heraldries; searching far lands,

Orient and occident, for all things rare.

To consecrate the toil of reverent hands,

And make his labor, like her virtue, fair;

Knowing no beauty beautiful as she,

And all his labor void, but to beguile

A sacred sorrow; so I worked. Ah, see

Here are the fragments of my shattered pile!

I keep them, and the flowers that sprang between

Their broken workmanship — the flowers and weeds!

Sleep soft among the violets, O my Queen, —

Lie calm among my ruined thoughts and deeds.

### EPILOGUE.

#### PART I.

CHANGE without term, and strife without result,

Persons that pass, and shadows that remain,

One strange, impenetrable, and occult

<p>Suggestion of a hope, that's hoped in vain, Behold the world man reigns in! His delight Deceives; his power fatigues; his strength is brief; Even his religion presupposes grief, His morning is not certain of the night.</p> <p>I have beheld, without regret, the trunk, Which propped three hundred summers on its boughs, Which housed, of old, the merry bird, and drunk The divine dews of air, and gave carouse To the free winds of heaven, lie overthrown Amidst the trees which its own fruitage bore. Its promise is fulfilled. It is no more, But it hath been. Its destiny is done.</p> <p>But the wild ash, that springs above the marsh! Strong and superb it rises o'er the wild. Vain energy of being! For the harsh And fetid ooze already hath de- filed The roots by whose sap it lives by. Heaven doth give No blessing to its boughs. The humid wind Rots them. The vapors warp them. All declined, Its life hath ceased, ere it hath ceased to live.</p> <p>Child of the waste, and nursling of the pest! A kindred fate hath watched and wept thy own. Thine epitaph is written in my breast.</p>	<p>Years change. Day treads out day. For me alone No change is nursed within the brooding bud. Satiety I have not known, and yet, I wither in the void of life, and fret A futile time, with an unpeaceful blood.</p> <p>The days are all too long, the nights too fair, And too much redness satiates the rose. O blissful season! blest and balmy air! Waves! moonlight! silence! years of lost repose! Bowers and shades that echoed to the tread Of young Romance! birds that, from woodland bars, Sang, serenading forth the timid stars! Youth! beauty! passion! whither are ye fled? I wait, and long have waited, and yet wait The coming of the footsteps which ye told My heart to watch for. Yet the hour is late, And ye have left me. Did they lie, of old, Your thousand voices prophesying bliss? That troubled all the current of a fate Which else might have been peace- ful! I await The thing I have not found, yet would not miss.</p> <p>To face out childhood, and grow up to man, To make a noise, and question all one sees, The astral orbit of a world to span, And, after a few days, to take one's ease</p>
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Under the graveyard grasses, —  
 this, my friend,  
 Appears to me a thing too strange  
 but what  
 I wish to know its meaning. I  
 would not  
 Depart before I have perceived the  
 end.

And I would know what, here below  
 the sun,  
 He is, and what is his place, that  
 being which seems  
 The end of all means, yet the means  
 of none;  
 Who searches and combines,  
 aspires and dreams;  
 Seeking new things with ever the  
 same hope,  
 Seeking new hopes in ever the  
 same thing;  
 A king without the powers of a  
 king,  
 A beggar with a kingdom in his  
 scope;

Who only sees in what he hath at-  
 tained  
 The means whereby he may attain  
 to more;  
 Who only finds in that which he  
 hath gained  
 The want of what he did not want  
 before;  
 Whom weakness strengthens; who  
 is soothed by strife;  
 Who seeks new joys to prize the  
 absent most;  
 Still from illusion to illusion tost,  
 Himself the great illusion of his  
 life!

Why is it, all deep emotion makes  
 us sigh  
 To quit this world? What better  
 thing than death  
 Can follow after rapture? "Let us  
 die!"  
 This is the last wish on the lover's  
 breath.

If thou wouldst live, content thee.  
 To enjoy  
 Is to begin to perish. What is  
 bliss,  
 But transit to some other state  
 from this?  
 That which we live for must our  
 life destroy.

Hast thou not ever longed for death?  
 If not,  
 Not yet thy life's experience is  
 attained.  
 But if thy days be favored, if thy lot  
 Be easy, if hope's summit thou  
 hast gained,  
 Die! Death is the sole future left  
 to thee.  
 The knowledge of this life is  
 bound, for each,  
 By his own powers. Death lies  
 between our reach  
 And all which, living, we have lived  
 to be.

Death is no evil, since it comes to  
 all.  
 For evil is the exception, not the  
 law.  
 What is it in the tempest that doth  
 call  
 Our spirits down its pathways?  
 or the awe  
 Of that abyss and solitude beneath  
 High mountain passes, which  
 doth aye attract  
 Such strange desire? or in the  
 cataract?  
 The sea? It is the sentiment of  
 death.

If life no more than a mere seeming  
 be,  
 Away with the imposture! If it  
 tend  
 To nothing, and to have lived seem-  
 ingly  
 Prove to be vain and futile in the  
 end.

Then let us die, that we may really live,  
 Or cease to feign to live. Let us possess  
 Lasting delight, or lasting quietness.  
 What life desires, death, only death, can give.

Where are the violets of vanished years?  
 The sunsets Rachel watched by Laban's well?  
 Where is Fidele's face? where Juliet's tears?  
 There comes no answer. There is none to tell

What we go questioning, till our mouths are stopt  
 By a clod of earth. Ask of the plangent sea,  
 The wild wind wailing through the leafless tree,  
 Ask of the meteor from the midnight dropt!

Come, Death, and bring the beauty back to all!  
 I do not seek thee, but I will not shun.

And let thy coming be at even-fall,  
 Thy pathway through the setting of the sun.

And let us go together, I with thee,  
 What time the lamps in Eden bowers are lit,  
 And Melancholy, all alone, doth sit

By the wide marge of some neglected sea.

## PART II.

ONE hour of English twilight once again!  
 Lo! in the rosy regions of the dew  
 The confines of the world begin to wane,  
 And Hesper doth his trembling lamp renew.  
 Now is the inauguration of the night!

Nature's release to wearied earth and skies!  
 Sweet truce of Care! Labor's brief armistice!  
 Best, loveliest interlude of dark and light!

The rookery, babbling in the sunken wood;  
 The watchdog, barking from the distant farm,  
 The dim light fading from the hornéd flood,  
 That winds the woodland in its silver arm;  
 The massed and immemorial oaks, whose leaves  
 Are husht in yonder healthy dells below;  
 The fragrance of the meadows that I know;  
 The bat, that now his wavering circle weaves

Around these antique towers, and casements deep  
 That glimmer, through the ivy and the rose,  
 To the faint moon, which doth begin to creep  
 Out of the inmost heart o' the heavens' repose,  
 To wander, all night long, without a sound,  
 Above the fields my feet oft wandered once;  
 The larches tall and dark, which do enconce  
 The little churchyard, in whose hallowed ground

Sleep half the simple friends my childhood knew:  
 All, all the sounds and sights of this blest hour,  
 Sinking within my heart of hearts, like dew,  
 Revive that so long parcht and drooping flower  
 Of youth, the world's hot breath for many years

Hath burned and withered; till  
 once more, once more,  
 The revelation and the dream of  
 yore  
 Return to solace these sad eyes with  
 tears!

Where now, alone, a solitary man,  
 I pace once more the pathways  
 of my home,  
 Light-hearted, and together, once  
 we ran,

I, and the infant guide that used  
 to roam

With me, the meads and meadow-  
 banks among,  
 At dusk and dawn. How light  
 those little feet

Danced through the dancing grass  
 and waving wheat,  
 Where'er, far off, we heard the  
 cuckoo's song!

know now, little Ella, what the  
 flowers

Said to you then, to make your  
 cheek so pale;

And why the blackbird in our laurel  
 bowers

Spake to you, only; and the poor,  
 pink snail

Feared less your steps than those of  
 the May-shower.

It was not strange these creatures  
 loved you so,

And told you all. 'Twas not so  
 long ago

You were, yourself, a bird, or else  
 a flower.

And, little Ella, you were pale, be-  
 cause

So soon you were to die. I know  
 that now.

And why there ever seemed a sort  
 of gauze

Over your deep blue eyes, and sad  
 young brow.

You were too good to grow up,  
 Ella, you,

And be a woman, such as I have  
 known!

And so upon your heart they put  
 a stone,  
 And left you, dear, amongst the  
 flowers and dew.

God's will is good. He knew what  
 would be best.

I will not weep thee, darling, any  
 more;

I have not wept thee; though my  
 heart, opprest

With many memories, for thy  
 sake is sore.

God's will is good, and great His  
 wisdom is.

Thou wast a little star, and thou  
 didst shine

Upon my cradle; but thou wast  
 not mine,

Thou wast not mine, my darling;  
 thou art His.

My morning star! twin sister of my  
 soul!

My little elfin friend from Fairy  
 Land!

Whose memory is yet innocent of  
 the whole

Of that which makes me doubly  
 need thy hand,

Thy little guiding hand so soon  
 withdrawn!

Here where I find so little like to  
 thee.

For thou wert as the breath of  
 dawn to me,

Starry, and pure, and brief as is the  
 dawn.

Thy knight was I, and thou my  
 Fairy Queen.

('Twas in the days of love and  
 chivalry!)

And thou didst hide thee in a bower  
 of green.

But thou so well hast hidden thee,  
 that I

Have never found thee since. And  
 thou didst set

Many a task, and quest, and high  
 emprise,

Ere I should win my guerdon from  
thine eyes,  
So many, and so many, that not yet

My tasks are ended, or my wander-  
ings o'er.

But some day thou wilt send across  
the main  
A magic bark, and I shall quit this  
shore

Of care, and find thee, in thy  
bower, again;  
And thou wilt say, "My brother,  
hast thou found  
Our home, at last?" . . . Whilst I,  
in answer, Sweet,  
Shall heap my life's last booty at  
thy feet,  
And bare my breast with many a  
bleeding wound.

The spoils of time! the trophies of  
the world!

The keys of conquered towns, and  
captived kings;  
▲ And many a broken sword, and ban-  
ner furled;  
The heads of giants, and swart  
Soldan's rings;  
And many a maiden's scarf; and  
many a wand  
Of baffled wizard; many an amu-  
let;  
And many a shield, with mine  
own heart's blood wet;  
And jewels, dear, from many a dis-  
tant land!

God's will is good. He knew what  
would be best.

I thought last year to pass away  
from life.  
I thought my toils were ended, and  
my quest  
Completed, and my part in this  
world's strife  
Accomplisht. And, behold! about  
me now  
There rest the gloom, the glory,  
and the awe

Of a new martyrdom, no dreams  
foresaw;  
And the thorn-crown hath blossomed  
on my brow.

A martyrdom, but with a martyr's  
joy!

A hope I never hoped for! and a  
sense  
That nothing henceforth ever can  
destroy:—

Within my breast the serene con-  
fidence

Of mercy in the misery of things;  
Of meaning in the mystery of all;  
Of blessing in whatever may be-  
fall;

Of rest predestined to all wanderings.

How sweet, with thee, my sister, to  
renew,

In lands of light, the search for  
those bright birds

Of plumage, so ethereal in its hue,  
And music sweeter than all mortal  
words,

Which some good angel to our child-  
hood sent

With messages from Paradisal  
flowers,

So lately left, the scent of Eden  
bowers

Yet lingered in our hair, where'er  
we went!

Now, they are all fled by, this many  
a year,

Adown the viewless valleys of the  
wind,

And never more will cross this  
hemisphere,

Those birds of passage! Never  
shall I find,

Dropt from the flight, you followed,  
dear, so far

That you will never come again,  
I know,

One plumelet on the paths by which  
I go,

Missing thy light there, O my morn-  
ing star!

Soft, over all, doth ancient twilight  
 cast  
 Her dim gray robe, vague as fu-  
 turity,  
 And sad and hoary as the ghostly  
 past,  
 Till earth assumes invisibility.  
 I hear the night-bird's note, where-  
 with she starts  
 The bee within the blossom from  
 his dream.  
 A light, like hope, from yonder  
 pane doth beam,  
 And now, like hope, it silently de-  
 parts.  
 Hush! from the clock within you  
 dark church spire,  
 Another hour broke, clanging, out  
 of time,  
 And passed me, throbbing like my  
 own desire,  
 Into the seven-fold heavens. And  
 now, the chime  
 Over the vale, the woodland, and  
 the river,  
 More faint, more far, a quivering  
 echo, strays  
 From that small twelve-houred  
 circle of our days  
 And spreads, and spreads, to the  
 great round Forever.  
 Pensive, the sombre ivied porch I  
 pass.  
 Through the dark hall, the sound  
 of my own feet  
 Pursues me, like the ghost of what  
 I was,  
 Into this silent chamber, where I  
 meet [race;  
 From wall to wall the fathers of my  
 The pictures of the past from wall  
 to wall;  
 Wandering o'er which, my wistful  
 glances fall,  
 To sink, at last, on little Ella's face.  
 This is my home. And hither I re-  
 turn,  
 After much wandering in the ways  
 of men,

Weary but not outworn. Here, with  
 her urn  
 Shall Memory come, and be my  
 denizen.  
 And blue-eyed Hope shall through  
 the window look,  
 And lean her fair child's face into  
 the room,  
 What time the hawthorn bud  
 anew, and bloom  
 The bright forget-me-nots beside the  
 brook.  
 Father of all which is, or yet may be.  
 Ere to the pillow which my child-  
 hood prest  
 This night restores my troubled  
 brows, by Thee  
 May this, the last prayer I have  
 learned, be blest!  
 Grant me to live that I may need  
 from life  
 No more than life hath given me,  
 and to die  
 That I may give to death no more  
 than I  
 Have long abandoned. And, if toil  
 and strife  
 Yet in the portion of my days must  
 be,  
 Firm be my faith, and quiet be my  
 heart!  
 That so my work may with my will  
 agree,  
 And strength be mine to calmly  
 fill my part  
 In Nature's purpose, questioning not  
 the end.  
 For love is more than raiment or  
 than food.  
 Shall I not take the evil with the  
 good?  
 Blesséd to me be all which thou dost  
 send!  
 Nor blest the least, recalling what  
 hath been,  
 The knowledge of the evil I have  
 known  
 Without me, and within me Since,  
 to lean

Upon a strength far mightier than  
 my own  
 Such knowledge brought me. In  
 whose strength I stand,  
 Firmly upheld, even though, in  
 ruin hurled,  
 The fixed foundations of this roll-  
 ing world  
 Should topple at the waving of Thy  
 hand.

## PART III.

HAIL thou! sole Muse that, in an  
 age of toil,  
 Of all the old Uranian sisterhood,  
 Art left to light us o'er the furrowed  
 soil  
 Of this laborious star! Muse, un-  
 subdued  
 By that strong hand which hath in  
 ruin razed  
 The temples of dread Jove! Muse  
 most divine,  
 Albeit but ill by these pale lips of  
 mine,  
 In days degenerate, first named and  
 praised!

Now the high airy kingdoms of the  
 day  
 Hyperion holds not. The disloyal  
 seas  
 Have broken from Poseidon's purple  
 sway.  
 Through Heaven's harmonious  
 golden palaces  
 No more the silver-sandalled mes-  
 sengers  
 Slide to sweet airs. Upon Olym-  
 pus' brow  
 The gods' great citadel is vacant  
 now.  
 And not a lute to Love in Lesbos  
 stirs.

But thou wert born not on the  
 Forkéd Hill,  
 Nor fed from Hybla's hives by  
 Attic bees,  
 Nor on the honey Cretan oaks distil,

Or once distilled, when gods had  
 homes in trees,  
 And young Apollo knew thee not.  
 Yet thou  
 With Ceres wast, when the pale  
 mother trod  
 The gloomy pathway to the nether  
 god,  
 And spake with that dim Power  
 which dwells below

The surface of whatever, where he  
 wends,  
 The circling sun illumineth. And  
 thou  
 Wast aye a friend to man. Of all  
 his friends,  
 Perchance the friend most needed:  
 needed now  
 Yet more than ever; in a complex  
 age  
 Which changes while we gaze at  
 it: from heaven  
 Seeking a sign, and finding no  
 sign given,  
 And questioning Life's worn book  
 at every page.

Nor ever yet, was song, untaught  
 by thee,  
 Worthy to live immortally with  
 man.  
 Wherefore, divine Experience, bend  
 on me  
 Thy deep and searching eyes.  
 Since life began,  
 Meek at thy mighty knees, though  
 oft reproved,  
 I have sat, spelling out slow time  
 with tears,  
 Where down the riddling alphabet  
 of years  
 Thy guiding finger o'er the horn-  
 book moved.

And I have put together many  
 names:  
 Sorrow, and Joy, and Hope, and  
 Memory,  
 And Love, and Anger; as an infant  
 frames



The initials of a language wherein  
 he  
 In manhood must with men com-  
 municate.  
 And oft, the words were hard to  
 understand,  
 Harder to utter; still the solemn  
 hand  
 Would pause, and point, and wait,  
 and move, and wait;  
 Till words grew into language. Lan-  
 guage grew  
 To utterance. Utterance into mu-  
 sic passed.  
 I sang of all I learned, and all I  
 knew.  
 And, looking upward in thy face,  
 at last,  
 Beheld it flusht, as when a mother  
 hears  
 Her infant feebly singing his first  
 hymn,  
 And dreams she sees, albeit unseen  
 of him,  
 Some radiant listener lured from  
 other spheres.  
 Such songs have been my solace  
 many a while  
 And oft, when other solace I had  
 none,  
 From grief which lay heart-broken  
 on a smile,  
 And joy that glittered like a win-  
 ter sun,  
 And froze, and fevered: from the  
 great man's scorn,  
 The mean man's envy; friend's  
 unfriendliness;  
 Love's want of human kindness,  
 and the stress  
 Of nights that hoped for nothing  
 from the morn.  
 From these, and worse than these,  
 did song unbar  
 A refuge through the ivory gate of  
 dreams,  
 Wherein my spirit grew familiar  
 With spirits that glide by spiritual  
 streams;

Song hath, for me, unsealed the  
 genii sleeping  
 Under mid seas, and lured out of  
 their lair  
 Beings with wondering eyes, and  
 wondrous hair,  
 Tame to my feet at twilight softly  
 creeping.  
 And song hath been my cymbal in  
 the hours  
 Of triumph; when behind me, far  
 away,  
 Lay Egypt, with its plagues; and,  
 by strange powers,  
 Not mine, upheld, life's heaped  
 ocean lay  
 On either side a passage for my soul.  
 A passage to the Land of Prom-  
 ise! trod  
 By giants, where the chosen race  
 of God  
 Shall find, at last, its long predes-  
 tined goal.  
 The breath which stirred these songs  
 a little while  
 Has fled by; and, with it,  
 fled too  
 The days I sought, thus singing, to  
 beguile  
 Of thoughts that spring like  
 weeds, which will creep  
 through  
 The blank interstices of ruined  
 fanes,  
 Where Youth, adoring, sacrificed  
 — its heart,  
 To gods forever fallen.  
 Now, we part,  
 My songs and I. We part, and what  
 remains?  
 Perchance an echo, and perchance  
 no more.  
 Harp of my heart, from thy brief  
 music dwells  
 In hearts, unknown, afar: as the  
 wide shore  
 Retains within its hundred hollow  
 shells  
 The voices of the spirits of the foam

Which murmur in the language  
of the deeps,  
Though haply far away, to one  
who keeps  
Such ocean wealth to grace an in-  
land home.

Within these cells of song, how  
frail soe'er,  
The vast and wandering tides of  
human life

Have murmured once; and left, in  
passing, there,  
Faint echoes of the tumult and  
the strife

Of the great ocean of humanity.  
Fairies have danced within these  
hollow caves,  
And Memory mused above the  
moonlit waves,  
And Youth, the lover, here hath  
lingered by.

I sung of life, as life would have  
me sing,  
Of falsehood, and of evil, and of  
wrong;

For many a false, and many an evil  
thing,

I found in life; and by my life  
my song  
Was shaped within me while I sung:  
I sung

Of Good, for good is life's predes-  
tined end;

Of Sorrow, for I knew her as my  
friend;

Of Love, for by his hand my harp  
was strung.

I have not scrawled above the tomb  
of Youth

Those lying epitaphs, which rep-  
resent

All virtues, and all excellence, save  
truth.

'Twere easy, thus, to have been  
eloquent,

If I had held the fashion of the age  
Which loves to hear its sounding  
flattery

Blown by all dusty winds from sky  
to sky,  
And finds its praises blotting every  
page.

And yet, the Poet and the Age are  
one.

And if the age be flawed, howe'er  
minute,  
Deep through the poet's heart that  
rent doth run,

And shakes and mars the music  
of his lute.

It is not that his sympathy is less  
With all that lives and all that  
feels around him,

But that so close a sympathy hath  
bound him

To these, that he must utter their  
distress.

We build the bridge, and swing the  
wondrous wire,

Bind with an iron hoop the rolling  
world;

Sport with the spirits of the ductile  
fire;

And leave our spells upon the va-  
por furled;

And cry— Behold the progress of  
the time!

Yet are we tending in an unknown  
land,

Whither, we neither ask nor un-  
derstand,

Far from the peace of our unvalued  
prime!

And Strength and Force, the fiends  
which minister

To some new-risen Power beyond  
our span,

On either hand, with hook and nail  
confer

To rivet the Promethean heart of  
man

Under the ravening and relentless  
beak

Of unappeasable Desire, which yet  
The very vitals of the age doth fret.

The limbs are mighty, but the heart  
is weak.

Writhe on, Prometheus! or whate'er  
 thox art,  
 Thou giant sufferer, groaning for  
 a race  
 Thou canst not save, for all thy  
 bleeding heart!  
 Thy wail my harp hath wakened;  
 and my place  
 Shall be beside thee; and my blessing  
 be  
 On all that makes me worthy yet  
 to share  
 Thy lonely martyrdom, and with  
 thee wear  
 That crown of anguish given to  
 poets, and thee!  
 If to have wept, and wildly; to have  
 loved  
 Till love grew torture; to have  
 grieved till grief  
 Became a part of life; if to have  
 proved  
 The want of all things; if, to draw  
 relief  
 From poesy for passion, this avail,  
 I lack no title to my crown. The  
 sea  
 Hath sent up nymphs for my society,  
 The mountains have been moved to  
 hear my wail.  
 Nature and man were children long  
 ago  
 In glad simplicity of heart and  
 speech.  
 Now they are strangers to each  
 other's woe;  
 And each hath language different  
 from each.  
 The simplest songs sound sweetest  
 and most good.  
 The simplest loves are the most  
 loving ones.  
 Happier were song's forefathers  
 than their sons,  
 And Homer sung as Byron never  
 could.  
 But Homer cannot come again: nor  
 ever

The quiet of the age in which he  
 sung.  
 This age is one of tumult and endeavor,  
 And by a fevered hand its harps  
 are strung.  
 And yet, I do not quarrel with the  
 time;  
 Nor quarrel with the tumult of my  
 heart,  
 Which of the tumult of the age is  
 part;  
 Because its very weakness is sublime.  
 The passions are as winds on the  
 wide sea  
 Of human life; which do impel  
 the sails  
 Of man's great enterprise, whate'er  
 that be.  
 The reckless helmsman, caught  
 upon these gales,  
 Under the roaring gulfs goes down  
 aghast.  
 The prudent pilot to the steady breeze  
 breeze  
 Specially gives head; and, over  
 perilous seas,  
 Drops anchor 'mid the Fortunate  
 Isles, at last.  
 We pray against the tempest and  
 the strife,  
 The storm, the whirlwind, and the  
 troublous hour,  
 Which vex the fretful element of life.  
 Me rather save, O dread disposing  
 Power,  
 From those dead calms, that flat and  
 hopeless lull,  
 In which the dull sea rots around  
 the bark,  
 And nothing moves save the sure-  
 creeping dark,  
 That slowly settles o'er an idle hull.  
 For in the storm, the tumult, and  
 the stir  
 That shakes the soul, man finds  
 his power and place  
 Among the elements. Deeps with  
 deeps confer,

<p>And Nature's secret settles in her face.          Let ocean to his inmost caves be stirred;          Let the wild light be smitten from the cloud.          The decks may reel, the masts be snapt and bowed,          But God hath spoken out, and man hath heard!</p> <p>Farewell, you lost inhabitants of my mind,          You fair ephemerals of faded hours!          Farewell, you lands of exile, whence each wind          Of memory steals with fragrance over flowers!          Farewell, Cordelia! Ella! . . . But not so          Farewell the memories of you which I have          Till strangers shall be sitting on my grave          And babbling of the dust which lies below.</p> <p>Blesséd the man whose life, how sad soe'er,          Hath felt the presence, and yet keeps the trace          Of one pure woman! With religious care          We close the doors, with reverent feet we pace          The vacant chambers, where, of yore, a Queen          One night hath rested. From my Past's pale walls          Yet gleam the unfaded fair memorials          Of her whose beauty there, awhile, hath been.</p> <p>She passed, into my youth, at its night-time,          When low the lamplight, and the music husht.          She passed and passed away, Some broken rhyme</p>	<p>Scrawled on the panel or the pane: the crusht          And faded rose she dropped: the page she turned          And finished not: the ribbon or the knot          That fluttered from her . . . . Stranger, harm them not!          I keep these sacred relics undiscerned.</p> <p>Men's truths are often lies, and women's lies          Often the setting of a truth most tender          In an unconscious poesy. The child cries          To clutch the star that lights its rosy splendor          In airy Edens of the west afar.          "Ah, folly!" sighs the father, o'er his book.          "Millions of miles above thy foolish nook          Of infantile desire, the Hesperus-star          "Descends not, child, to twinkle on thy cot."          Then readjusts his blind-wise spectacles,          While tears to sobs are changing, were it not          The mother, with those tender syllables          Which even Dutch mothers can make musical too,          Murmurs, "Sleep, sleep, my little one! and I          Will pluck thy star for thee, and by and by          Lay it upon thy pillow bright with dew."</p> <p>And the child sleeps, and dreams of stars whose light          Beams in his own bright eyes when he awakes.          So sleep! so dream! If aught I read aright          That star, poor babe, which o'er thy cradle shakes,</p>
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<p>Thy fate may fall, in after years, to be That other child that, like thee, loves the star, And, like thee, weeps to find it all so far, Feeling its force in his nativity : —</p> <p>That other infant, all as weak, as wild, As passionate, and as helpless, as thou art, Whom men will call a Poet (Poet, or child, The star is still so distant from the heart!)</p> <p>If so, heaven grant that thou mayst find at last; Since such there are, some woman, whose sweet smile, Pitying, may thy fond fancy yet beguile</p> <p>To dream the star, which thou hast sought, thou hast!</p> <p>For men, if thou shouldst heed what they may say, Will break thy heart, or leave thee, like themselves, No heart for breaking. Wherefore I do pray My book may lie upon no learned shelves, But that in some deep summer eve, perchance, Some woman, melancholy-eyed, and pale,</p>	<p>Whose heart, like mine, hath suf- fered, may this tale Read by the soft light of her own romance.</p> <p>Go forth over the wide world, Song of mine! As Noah's dove out of his bosom flew Over the desolate, vast, and wander- ing brine. Seek thou thy nest afar. Thy plaint renew From heart to heart, and on from land to land Fly boldly, till thou find that un- known friend Whose face, in dreams, above my own doth bend, Then tell that spirit what it will un- derstand,</p> <p>Why men can tell to strangers all the tale From friends reserved. And tell that spirit, my Song, Wherefore I have not faltered to unveil The cryptic forms of error and of wrong. And say, I suffered more than I re- corded, That each man's life is all men's lesson. Say, And let the world believe thee, as it may, Thy tale is true, however weakly worded.</p>
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TANNHÄUSER;<sup>1</sup>

OR,

## THE BATTLE OF THE BARDS.

*A portion of this poem was written by another hand.*

<p>THIS is the Land, the happy valleys these, Broad breadths of plain, blue-veined by many a stream, Umbrageous hills, sweet glades, and forests fair, O'er which our good liege, Land- grave Herman rules. This is Thuringia: yonder, on the heights, Is Wartburg, seat of our dear lord's abode, Famous through Christendom for many a feat Of deffest knights, chief stars of chivalry, At tourney in its courts; nor more renowned For deeds of Prowess than exploits of Art, Achieved when, vocal in its Muses' hall, The minstrel-knights their glorious jousts renew, And for the laurel wage harmonious war. On this side spreads the Chase in wooded slopes And sweet acclivities; and, all be- yond,</p>	<p>The open flats lie fruitful to the sun Full many a league; till dark against the sky, Bounding the limits of our lord's domain, The Hill of Hörzel rears his horrid front. Woe to the man who wanders in the vast Of those unhallowed solitudes, if Sin, Quickening the lust of carnal appe- tite, Lurk secret in his heart: for all their caves Echo weird strains of magic, direful- sweet, That lap the wanton sense in bliss- ful ease; While through the ear a reptile mu- sic creeps, And, blandly-busy, round about the soul Weaves its fell web of sounds. The unhappy wight Thus captive made in soft and silken bands Of tangled harmony, is led away — Away adown the ever-darkening caves,</p>
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<sup>1</sup> The reader is solicited to adopt the German pronunciation of TANNHAUSER, by sounding it as if it were written, in English, Tannhoiser.

<p>Away from fairness and the face of          God,          Away into the mountain's mystic          womb,          To where, reclining on her impious          couch          All the fair length of her lascivious          limbs,          Languid in light from roseate tapers          flung,          Incensed with perfumes, tended on          by fays,          The lustful Queen, waiting damna-          tion, holds          Her bestial revels. The Queen of          Beauty once,          A goddess called and worshipped in          the days          When men their own infirmities          adored,          Deeming divine who in themselves          summed up          The full-blown passions of human-          ity.          Large fame and lavish service had          she then,          Venus ycleped, of all the Olympian          crew          Least continent of Spirits and most          fair. [men,          So reaped she honor of unwistful          Roman, or Greek, or dwellers on          the plains          Of Egypt, or the isles to utmost Ind;          Till came the crack of that tremen-          dous Doom          That sent the false gods shivering          from their seats,          Shattered the superstitious dome          that bleared          Heaven's face to man, and on the          lurid world          Let in effulgence of untainted light.          As when, laid bare beneath the del-          ver's toil          On some huge bulk of buried          masonry          In hoar Assyria, suddenly revealed          A chamber, gay with sculpture and          the pomp</p>	<p>Of pictured tracery on its glowing          walls,          No sooner breathes the wholesome          heavenly air          Than fast its colored bravery fades,          and fall          Its ruined statues, crumbled from          their crypts,          And all its gauds grow dark at sight          of day;          So darkened and to dusty ruin fell          The fleeting glories of a Pagan faith          Bared to Truth's influences bland          and smit          Blind by the splendors of the Beth-          lehem Dawn.          Then from their shattered temple in          the minds          Of men, and from their long familiar          homes.          Their altars, fanes, and shrines, the          sumptuous seats          Of their mendacious oracles, out-          slunk          The wantons of Olympus. Forth          they fled,          Forth from Dodona, Delos, and the          depths          Of wooded Ida; from Athenæ forth,          Cithæron, Paphos, Thebes, and all          their groves          Of oak or poplar, dismally to roam          About the new baptized earth; ex-          iled,          Bearing the curse, yet suffered for a          space,          By Heaven's clear sapience and in-          scrutible ken,          To range the wide world, and assay          their powers          To unregenerate redeemed man-          kind:          If haply they by shadows and by          shows,          Phantasmagoria, and illusions          wrought [draw          Of sight or sound by sorcery, may          Unwary men, or weak, into the nets          Of Satan their great Captain She          renowned</p>
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<p>         "The fairest," fleeing from her          Cyprian isle,          Swept to the northwards many a          league, and lodged          At length on Hürsel, into whose          dark womb          She crept confounded. Thither          soon she drew          Lewd Spirits to herself, and there          abides,          Holding her devilish orgies; and has          power          With siren voices crafty to compel          Into her wanton home unhappy men          Whose souls to sin are prone. The          pure at heart          Nathless may roam about her pesti-          lent hill          Untainted, proof against perfidious          sounds          Within whose ears an angel ever          sings          Good tidings of great joy. Nor          even they,          Whose hearts are gross, and who          inflamed with lust          Enter, entrapped by sorceries, to her          cave,          Are damned beyond redemption.          For a while,          Slaves of their bodies, in the sloughs          of Sin,          They roll contented, wallowing in          the arms          Of their libidinous goddess. But,          ere long,          Comes loathing of the sensual air          they breathe,          Loathing of light unhallowed, sick-          ening sense          Of surfeited enjoyment; and their          lips,          Spurning the reeky pasture, yearn          for draughts          Of rock-rebounding rills, their eyes          for sight          Of Heaven, their limbs for lengths          of dewy grass:          What time sharp Conscience pricks          them, and awake       </p>	<p>         Starts the requickened soul with all          her powers,          And breaks, if so she will, the mur-          derous spell,          Calling on God. God to her rescue          sends          Voiced seraphims that lead the          sinner forth          From darkness unto day, from foul          embrace [lap          Of that bloat Queen into the mother          Of earth, and the caressent airs of          Heaven;          Where he, by strong persistency of          prayer,          By painful pilgrimage, by lengths of          fast          That tame the rebel flesh, by many          a night          Of vigil, days of deep repentant          tears,          May cleanse his soul of her adulter-          ate stains.          May from his sin-incrusted spirit          shake          The leprous scales, — and, purely at          the feet          Of his redemption falling, may arise          Of Christ accepted. Whoso doubts          the truth,          Doubting how deep divine Compas-          sion is,          Lend to my tale a willing ear, and          learn.          Full twenty summers have fled o'er          the land,          A score of winters on our Land-          grave's head          Have showered their snowy honors,          since the days          When in his court no nobler knight          was known,          And in his halls no happier bard was          heard,          Than bright Tannhäuser. Warrior,          minstrel, he          Throve for a while within the general          eye, [tales,          As some king-cedar, in Crusader       </p>
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<p>The stateliest growth of Lebanonian groves:          For now I sing him in his matchless prime,          Not, as in latter days, defaced and marred          By secret sin, and like the wasted torch          Found in the dank grass at the ghastly dawn,          After a witches' revel. He was a man          In whom prompt Nature, as in those soft climes          Where life is indolently opulent, Blossomed unbid to graces barely won          From tedious culture, where less kindly stars          Cold influence keep; and trothful men, who once          Looked in his lordly, luminous eyes, and scanned          His sinewous frame, compact of pliant power,          Aver he was the fairest-favored knight [looks,          That ever, in the light of ladies' Made gay these goodly halls. Oh! deeper dole, [fair,          That so august a Spirit, sphered so Should from the starry sessions of his peers          Decline, to quench so bright a brilliancy          In Hell's sick spume. Ay me, the deeper dole!          From yonder tower the wheeling lapwing loves          Beyond all others, that o'ertops the pines,          And from his one white, wistful window stares          Into the sullen heart o' the land, — erewhile          The wandering woodman oft, at night-fall, heard          A sad, wild strain of solitary song          Float o'er the forest. Whoso heard it, paused</p>	<p>Compassionately, crossed himself, and sighed,          "Alas! poor princess, to thy piteous moan          Heaven send sweet peace!" Heaven heard, and now she lies          Under the marble, 'mid the silent tombs,          Calm with her kindred; as her soul above          Rests with the saints of God.          The brother's child          Of our good lord the Landgrave was this maid,          And here with him abode; for in the breach          At Ascalon, her sire in Holy Land          Had fallen, fighting for the Cross. These halls          Sheltered her infancy, and here she grew [pale,          Among the shaggy barons, like the Mild-eyed, March-violet of the North, that blows          Bleak under bergs of ice. Full fair she grew,          And all men loved the rare Elizabeth;          But she, of all men, loved one man the most,          Tannhäuser, minstrel, knight, the man in whom          Allmankind flowered. Fairer growth indeed,          Of knighthood never blossomed to the eye;          But, furred beneath that florid surface, lurked          A vice of nature, breeding death, not life;          Such as where some rich Roman, to delight          Luxurious days with labyrinthian walks          Of rose and lily, marble fountains, forms          Wanton of Greece or Nymph, and winding frieze          With sculpture rough, hath decked the summer haunts</p>
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Of his voluptuous villa, — there, festooned  
 With flowers, among the Graces and the Gods,  
 The lurking fever glides.

A dangerous skill,  
 Caught from the custom of those troubadours

That roam the wanton South, too near the homes

Of the lost gods, had crept in careless use

Among our northern bards; to play the thief

Upon the poets of a pagan time,  
 And steal, to purfle their embroidered lays, [lore.

Voluptuous trappings of lascivious  
 Hence had Tannhäuser, from of old, indulged

In song too lavish license to mislead  
 The sense among those fair but phantom forms

That haunt the unhallowed past: wherefrom One Shape

Forth of the cloudy circle gradual grew

Distinct, in dissolute beauty. She of old,

Who from the idle foam arose, to reign [fiend,

In fancies all as idle, — that fair Venus, whose temples are the veins in youth.

Now more and ever more she mixed herself

With all his moods, and whispered in his walks;

Or through the misty minster, when he kneeled

Meek on the flint, athwart the incense-smoke

She stole on sleeping sunbeams, sprinkled sounds

Of fymbals through the silver psalms, and marred

His adoration: most of all, whene'er  
 He sought to fan those fires of holy love

That, sleeping oftenest, sometimes leapt to flame,

Kindled by kindred passion in the eyes

Of sweet Elizabeth, round him rose and rolled

That miserable magic; and, at times, It drove him forth to wander in the

waste  
 And desert places, there where prayerless man

Is most within the power of prowling fiends.

Time put his sickle in among the days.

Outcropped the coming harvest; and there came

An evening with the Princess, when they twain

Together ranged the terrace that o'erlaps

The great south garden. All her simple hair

A single sunbeam from the sleepy west

O'erfloated; swam her soft blue eyes suffused

With tender ruth, and her meek face was moved

To one slow, serious smile, that stole to find

Its resting-place on his.

Then, while he looked  
 On that pure loveliness, within himself

He faintly felt a mystery like pure love:

For through the arid hollows of a heart

Sered by delirious dreams, the dewy sense

Of innocent worship stole. The one great word

That long had hovered in the silent mind

Now on the lip half settled; for not yet

Had love between them been a spoken sound [here

For after speech to lean on; only

And there, where scattered pauses  
 strewed their talk,  
 Love seemed to o'erpoise the silence,  
 like a star  
 Seen through a tender trouble of  
 light clouds.  
 But, in that moment, some myster-  
 rious touch,  
 A thought—who knows?—a memory  
 —something caught  
 Perchance from flying fancies, taking  
 form [gusts  
 Among the sunset clouds, or scented  
 Of evening through the gorgeous  
 glooms, shrunk up  
 His better angel, and at once awaked  
 The carnal creature sleeping in the  
 flesh.  
 Then died within his heart that word  
 of life  
 Unspoken, which, if spoken, might  
 have saved  
 The dreadful doom impending. So  
 they twain  
 Parted, and nothing said: she to her  
 tower,  
 There with meek wonder to renew  
 the calm  
 And customary labor of the loom;  
 And he into the gradual-creeping  
 dark  
 Which now began to draw the rooks  
 to roost  
 Along the windless woods.  
 His soul that eve  
 Shook strangely if some flickering  
 shadow stole  
 Across the slopes where sunset,  
 sleeping out  
 The day's last dream, yet lingered  
 low. Old songs  
 Were sweet about his brain, old  
 fancies fair  
 O'erflowed with lurid life the lonely  
 land:  
 The twilight trooped with antic  
 shapes, and swarmed  
 Above him, and the deep mysterious  
 woods [doom.  
 With mystic music drew him to his

So rapt, with idle and with errant  
 foot  
 He wandered on to Hörsel, and those  
 glades  
 Of melancholy fame, whose poison-  
 ous glooms,  
 Decked with the gleaming hemlock,  
 darkly fringe  
 The Mount of Venus. There, a  
 drowsy sense  
 Of languor seized him; and he sat  
 him down  
 Among a litter of loose stones and  
 blocks [weed,  
 Of broken columns, overrun with  
 Remnants of heathen work that  
 sometime propped  
 A pagan temple.  
 Suddenly, the moon,  
 Slant from the shoulder of the mon-  
 strous hill,  
 Swung o'er a sullen lake, and softly  
 touched  
 With light a shattered statue in the  
 weed.  
 He lifted up his eyes, and all at once  
 Bright in her baleful beauty, he be-  
 held  
 The goddess of his dreams. Be-  
 holding whom,  
 Lost to his love, forgetful of his faith,  
 And fevered by the stimulated sense  
 Of reprobate desire, the madman  
 cried:  
 "Descend, Dame Venus, on my soul  
 descend!  
 Break up the marble sleep of those  
 still brows  
 Where beauty broods! Down all my  
 senses swim,  
 As yonder moon to yonder love-lit  
 lake  
 Swims down in glory!"  
 Hell the horrid prayer  
 Accorded with a curse. Scarce those  
 wild words  
 Were uttered, when like mist the  
 marble moved,  
 Flusht with false life. Deep in a  
 sleepy cloud

He seemed to sink beneath the  
 sumptuous face  
 Leaned o'er him,—all the whiteness,  
 all the warmth,  
 And all the luxury of languid limbs,  
 Where violet vein-streaks, lost in  
 limpid lengths  
 Of snowy surface, wander faint and  
 fine;  
 Whilst cymballed music, stolen from  
 underneath,  
 Creeps through a throbbing light that  
 grows and glows  
 From glare to greater glare, until it  
 gluts  
 And gulfs him in.  
 And from that hour, in court,  
 And chase, and tilted tourney, many  
 a month,  
 From mass in holy church, and mirth  
 in hall,  
 From all the fair assemblage of his  
 peers,  
 And all the feudatory festivals,  
 Men missed Tannhäuser.

At the first, as when  
 From some great oak his goodliest  
 branch is lopped,  
 The little noisy birds, that built  
 about  
 The foliage, gather in the gap with  
 shrill  
 And querulous curiosity; even so,  
 From all the twittering tongues that  
 thronged the court  
 Rose general hubbub of astonish-  
 ment,  
 And vexed surmise about the absent  
 man:  
 Why absent? whither wandered? on  
 what quest  
 Of errant prowess?—for, as yet,  
 none knew [on,  
 His miserable fall. But time wore  
 The wonder wore away; round ab-  
 sence crept  
 The weed of custom, and the absent  
 one  
 Became at last a memory, and no  
 more.

One heart within that memory lived  
 aloof;  
 One face, remembering his, forgot  
 to smile;  
 Our Landgrave's niece the old  
 familiar ways  
 Walked like a ghost with unfamiliar  
 looks.

Time put his sickle in among the  
 days.  
 The rose burned out; red Autumn  
 lit the woods;  
 The last snows, melting, changed to  
 snowy clouds;  
 And Spring once more with incan-  
 tations came  
 To wake the buried year. Then did  
 our liege,  
 Lord Landgrave Herman, — for he  
 loved his niece,  
 And lightly from her simple heart  
 had won  
 The secret of lost smiles, and why  
 she drooped,  
 A wilted flower,—thinking to dispel,  
 If that might be, her mournfulness,  
 let cry  
 By heralds that, at coming Whitsun-  
 tide,  
 The minstrel-knights in Wartburg  
 should convene  
 To hold high combat in the craft of  
 song,  
 And sing before the Princess for the  
 prize.

But, ere that time, it fell upon a day  
 When our good lord went forth to  
 hunt the hart,  
 That he with certain of his court,  
 'mid whom  
 Was Wolfram,—once Tannhäuser's  
 friend, himself  
 Among the minstrels held in high re-  
 nown,—  
 Came down the Wartburg valley,  
 where they deemed  
 To hold the hart at siege, and found  
 him not:

But found, far down, at bottom of  
 the glade,  
 Beneath a broken cross, a lonely  
 knight  
 Who sat on a great stone, watching  
 the clouds.  
 And Wolfram, being a little in the  
 van  
 Of all his fellows, eager for the  
 hunt,  
 Hurriedly ran to question of the  
 knight  
 If he had viewed the hart. But  
 when he came  
 To parley with him, suddenly he  
 gave  
 A shout of great good cheer; for,  
 all at once,  
 In that same knight he saw, and  
 knew, though changed,  
 Tannhäuser, his old friend and  
 fellow-bard.

Now, Wolfram long had loved  
 Elizabeth  
 As one should love a star in heaven,  
 who knows  
 The distance of it, and the reachless-  
 ness.  
 But when he knew Tannhäuser in  
 her heart  
 (For loving eyes, in eyes beloved, are  
 swift  
 To search out secrets) not the less  
 his own  
 Ciave unto both; and, from that  
 time, his love  
 Lived like an orphan child in  
 charity,  
 Whose loss came early, and is  
 gently borne,  
 Too deep for tears, too constant for  
 complaint.  
 And, therefore, in the absence of  
 his friend  
 His inmost heart was heavy, when  
 he saw [face  
 The shadow of that absence in the  
 He loved beyond all faces upon  
 earth.

So that when now he found that  
 friend again  
 Whom he had missed and mourned,  
 right glad was he  
 Both for his own and for the  
 Princess' sake :  
 And ran and fell upon Tannhäuser's  
 neck,  
 And all for joy constrained him to  
 his heart,  
 Calling his fellows from the neigh-  
 boring hills, —  
 Who, crowding, came, great hearts  
 and open arms  
 To welcome back their peer. The  
 Landgrave then,  
 When he perceived his well-belovéd  
 knight,  
 Was passing glad, and would have  
 questioned him  
 Of his long absence. But the man  
 himself  
 Could answer nothing; staring with  
 blank eyes  
 From face to face, then up into the  
 blue  
 Bland heavens above; astonished, and  
 like one  
 Who, suddenly awaking out of sleep  
 After sore sickness, knows his friends  
 again,  
 And would peruse their faces, but  
 breaks off  
 To list the frolic bleating of the  
 lamb [world  
 In far-off fields, and wonder at the  
 And all its strangeness. Then, while  
 The glad knights  
 Clung round him, wrung his hands,  
 and dinned his ears  
 With clattering query, our fair lord  
 himself  
 Unfolded how, upon the morrow  
 morn,  
 There should be holden festive in  
 his halls  
 High meeting of the minstrels of  
 the land,  
 To sing before the Princess for the  
 prize :

Whereto he bade him with, "O sir,  
 be sure  
 There lives a young voice that shall  
 tax your wit  
 To justify this absence from your  
 friends.  
 We trust, at least, that you have  
 brought us back  
 A score of giants' beards, or dragons'  
 tails,  
 To lay them at the feet of our fair  
 niece.  
 For think not, truant, that Eliza-  
 beth  
 Will hold you lightly quitted."  
 At that name,  
 Elizabeth, he started as a man  
 That hears on foreign shores, from  
 alien lips,  
 Some name familiar to his father-  
 land;  
 And all at once the man's heart inly  
 yearns  
 For brooks that bubble, and for  
 woods that wave  
 Before his father's door, while he  
 forgets  
 The forms about him. So, Tann-  
 häuser mused  
 A little space, then faltered: "O my  
 liege,  
 Fares my good lady well? — I pray  
 my lord  
 That I may draw me hence a little  
 while,  
 For all my mind is troubled: and,  
 indeed, [skill,  
 I know not if my harp have lost his  
 But, skilled, or skillless, it shall find  
 some tone  
 To render thanks to-morrow to my  
 lord;  
 To whose behests a bondsman, in so  
 far  
 As my poor service holds, I will  
 assay  
 To sing before the Princess for the  
 prize."  
 Then, on the morrow morn, from  
 far and near

Flowed in the feudatory lords. The  
 hills  
 Broke out ablaze with banners, and  
 rung loud  
 With tingling trumpet notes, and  
 neighing steeds.  
 For all the land, elate with lusty  
 life,  
 Buzzed like a beehive in the sun,  
 and all  
 The castle swarmed from bridge to  
 barbican  
 With mantle and with mail, whilst  
 minster bells  
 Rang hoarse their happy chimes, till  
 the high noon  
 Clanged from the towers. Then,  
 o'er the platform stoled  
 And canopied in crimson, lightly  
 blew  
 The sceptred heralds on the silver  
 trump  
 Intense sonorous music, sounding in  
 The knights to hall. Shrill clinked  
 the corridors  
 Through all the courts with clashing  
 heels, or moved  
 With silken murmurs, and elastic  
 sounds  
 Of lady laughters light; as in they  
 flowed  
 Lord, Liegeman, Peer, and Prince,  
 and Paladin,  
 And dame and damsel, clad in dimp-  
 ling silk  
 And gleaming pearl; who, while  
 the groaning roofs  
 Re-echoed royal music, swept adown  
 The spacious hall, with due obeis-  
 sance made  
 To the high daïs, and on glittering  
 seats  
 Dropped one by one, like flocks of  
 burnished birds  
 That settle down with sunset-painted  
 plumes  
 On gorgeous woods. Again from  
 the outer wall  
 The intermitted trumpet blared; and  
 each

Pert page, a-tiptoe, from the benches  
 leaned  
 To see the minstrel-knights, gold-  
 filleted,  
 That entered now the hall: Sir  
 Mandeville,  
 The Swan of Eisnach; Wilfrid of  
 the Hills;  
 Wolfram, surnamed of Willow-  
 brook; and next  
 Tannhäuser, christened of the Gold-  
 en Harp;  
 With Walter of the Heron-chase:  
 and Max,  
 The seer; Sir Rudolph, of the  
 Ravenscrest;  
 And Franz, the falconer. They en-  
 tered, each  
 In order, followed by a blooming boy  
 That bore his harp, and, pacing for-  
 ward, bowed  
 Before the Landgrave and Elizabeth.  
 Pale sat the Princess in her chair of  
 state, [lied  
 Perusing with fixed eyes, that all be-  
 Her throbbing heart, the carven  
 architrave,  
 Whereon the intricate much-vexed  
 design  
 Of leaf and stem disintertwined itself  
 With infinite laboriousness, at last  
 Escaping in a flight of angel forms;  
 As though the carver's thought had  
 been to show  
 The weary struggle of the soul to free  
 Her flight from earth's bewilder-  
 ment, and all  
 That frets her in the flesh. But  
 when, erewhile,  
 The minstrels entered, and Tann-  
 häuser bowed  
 Before the daïs, the Landgrave, at  
 her side,  
 Saw as he mused what theme to  
 give for song,  
 The pallid forehead of Elizabeth  
 Flush to the fair roots of her golden  
 hair,  
 And thought within himself: "Our  
 knight delays

To own a love that aims so near our  
 throne;  
 Hence, haply, this late absence from  
 our court,  
 And those bewildered moods which  
 I have marked:  
 But since love lightly catches, where  
 it can,  
 At any means to make itself ap-  
 proved,  
 And since the singer may to song  
 confide  
 What the man dares not trust to  
 simple speech,  
 I, therefore, so to ease two hearts  
 at once,  
 And signify our favor unto both,  
 Will to our well-belovéd minstrels  
 give  
 No theme less sweet than Love:  
 for, surely, he  
 That loves the best, will sing the  
 best, and bear  
 The prize from all." Therewith the  
 Landgrave rose,  
 And all the murmuring Hall was  
 hushed to hear.  
 "O well-belovéd minstrels, in my  
 mind  
 I do embrace you all, and heartily  
 Bid you a lavish welcome to these  
 halls.  
 Oft have you flooded this fair space  
 with song,  
 Waked these voiced walls, and vocal  
 made yon roof,  
 As waves of surging music lapped  
 against  
 Its resonant rafters. Often have  
 your strains  
 Ennobled souls of true nobility,  
 Rapt by your perfect pleadings in the  
 cause  
 Of all things pure unto a purer sense  
 Of their exceeding loveliness. No  
 power  
 Is subtler o'er the spirit of man than  
 Song—  
 Sweet echo of great thoughts, that,  
 in the mind

Of him who hears congenial echoes  
waking,  
Remultiplies the praise of what is  
good.  
Song cheers the emulous spirit to  
the top  
Of Virtue's rugged steep, from  
whence, all heights  
Of human worth attained, the mortal  
may  
Conjecture of God's unattainable,  
Which is Perfection. — Faith, with  
her sisters twain  
Of Hope and Charity, ye oft have  
sung,  
And loyal Truth have lauded, and  
have wreathed  
A coronal of music round the brows  
Of stainless Chastity; nor less have  
praised  
High-minded Valor, in whose right-  
eous hand  
Burns the great sword of flaming  
Fortitude,  
And have stirred up to deeds of high  
emprize  
Our noble knights (yourselves among  
the noblest)  
Whether on German soil for me,  
their prince,  
Fighting, or in the Land of Christ  
for God.  
Sing ye to-day another theme; to-day  
Within our glad society we see,  
To fellowship of loving friends re-  
stored,  
A long-missed face; and hungerly  
our ears  
Wait the melodious murmurs of a  
harp  
That wont to feed them daintily.  
What drew  
Our singer forth, and led the fairest  
light  
Of all our galaxy to swerve astray  
From his fixed orbit, and what now  
re-spheres,  
After deflection long, our errant orb,  
Implies a secret that the subtle power  
Of Song, perchance, may solve. Be  
then your theme

As universal as the heart of man,  
Giving you scope to touch its deep-  
est depths,  
Its highest heights, and reverently  
to explore  
Its mystery of mysteries. Sing of  
Love:  
Tell us, ye noble poets, from what  
source  
Springs the prime passion; to what  
goal it tends!  
Sing it how brave, how beautiful,  
how bright,  
In essence how ethereal, in effect  
How palpable, how human yet di-  
vine.  
Up! up! loved singers, smite into  
the chords,  
The lists are opened, set your lays  
in rest,  
And who of Love best chants the  
perfect praise,  
Him shall Elizabeth as conqueror  
hail  
And round his royal temples bind  
the bays."

He said, and sat. And from the  
middle-hall  
Four pages, bearers of the blazoned  
urn  
That held the name-scrolls of the  
listed bards,  
Moved to Elizabeth. Daintily her  
hand  
Dipped in the bowl, and one drawn  
scroll delivered  
Back to the pages, who, perusing,  
cried:  
"Sir Wolfram of the Willow-brook,  
— begin."

Up rose the gentle singer — he  
whose lays,  
Melodious-melancholy, through the  
Land  
Live to this day — and, fair obeisance  
made,  
Assumed his harp and stood in act  
to sing.



Awhile, his dreamy fingers o'er the  
chords  
Wandered at will, and to the roof  
was turned  
His meditative face; till, suddenly,  
A soft light from his spiritual eyes  
Broke, and his canticle he thus be-  
gan: —

“Love among the saints of God,  
Love within the hearts of men,  
Love in every kindly sod  
That breeds a violet in the glen;  
Love in heaven, and Love on earth,  
Love in all the amorous air;

Whence comes Love? ah! tell  
me where  
Had such a gracious Presence  
birth?

Lift thy thoughts to Him, all-  
knowing,  
In the hallowed courts above;  
From His throne, forever flowing,  
Springs the fountain of all Love:  
Down to earth the stream de-  
scending

Meets the hills, and murmurs then,  
In a myriad channels wending,  
Through the happy haunts of men.  
Blesséd ye, earth's sons and  
daughters,

Love among you flowing free;  
Guard, oh! guard its sacred waters,  
Tend on them religiously:  
Let them through your hearts  
steal sweetly,

With the Spirit, wise and bland,  
Minister unto them meetly,  
Touch them not with carnal hand.

“Maiden, fashioned so divinely,  
Whom I worship from afar,  
Smile thou on my soul benignly  
Sweet, my solitary star:  
Gentle harbinger of gladness,  
Still be with me on the way;  
Only soother of my sadness,  
Always near, though far away:  
Always near, since first upon me  
Fell thy brightness from above,  
And my troubled heart within me

Felt the sudden flow of Love;  
At thy sight that gushing river  
Paused, and fell to perfect rest,  
And the pool of Love forever  
Took thy image to its breast.

“Let me keep my passion purely  
Guard its waters free from blame  
Hallow Love, as knowing surely  
It returneth whence it came;  
From all channels, good or evil,  
Love, to its pure source enticed,  
Finds its own immortal level  
In the charity of Christ.

“Ye who hear, behold the river.  
Whence it cometh, whither goes;  
Glory be to God, the Giver,  
From whose grace the fountain  
flows,  
Flows and spreads through all  
creation,  
Counter-charm of every curse,  
Love, the waters of Salvation,  
Flowing through the universe?”

And still the rapt bard, though his  
voice had ceased,

And all the Hall had murmured into  
praise,

Pursued his plaintive theme among  
the chords,

Blending with instinct fine the in-  
tricate throng

Of thoughts that flowed beneath  
his touch to find

Harmonious resolution. As he  
closed,

Tannhäuser rising, fretted with de-  
lay,

Sent flying fingers o'er the strings,  
and sang: —

“Love be my theme! Sing her  
awake,

My harp, for she hath tamely  
slept

In Wolfram's song, a stagnant  
lake

O'er which a shivering star hath  
crept.

"Awake, dull waters, from your  
 sleep,  
 Rise, Love, from thy delicious  
 well,  
 A fountain! — yea, but flowing  
 deep  
 With nectar and with hydromel;  
 "With gurgling murmurs sweet,  
 that teach  
 My soul a sleep-distracting dream,  
 Till on the marge I lie, and reach  
 My longing lips towards the  
 stream;  
 "Whose waves leap upwards to  
 the brink  
 With drowning kisses to invite  
 And drag me, willing, down to  
 drink  
 Delirious draughts of rare Delight;  
 "Who careless drink, as knowing  
 well  
 The happy pastime shall not tire,  
 For Love is inexhaustible,  
 And all-unfailing my Desire.

"Love's fountain-marge is fairly  
 spread  
 With every incense-flower that  
 blows,  
 With flossy sedge, and moss that  
 grows  
 For fervid limbs a dewy bed;

"And fays and fairies flit and  
 wend  
 To keep the sweet stream flowing  
 free,  
 And on Love's languid votary  
 The little elves delighted tend;

"And bring him honey-dews to  
 sip,  
 Rare balms to cool him after play,  
 Or with sweet unguents smooth  
 away  
 The kiss-crease on his ruffled lip;

"And lilywhite his limbs they  
 lave,  
 And roses in his cheeks renew,  
 That he, refreshed, return to glue  
 His lips to Love's caressent wave;

"And feel, in that immortal kiss,  
 His mortal instincts die the death,  
 And human fancy fade beneath  
 The taste of unimagined bliss!

"Thus, gentle audience, since your  
 ear  
 Best loves a metaphoric lay,  
 Of mighty Love I warble here  
 In figures, such as Fancy may:

"Now know ye how of Love I  
 think  
 As of a fountain, failing never,  
 On whose soft marge I lie, and  
 drink  
 Delicious draughts of Joy for-  
 ever."

Abrupt he ceased, and sat. And  
 for a space,  
 No longer than the subtle lightning  
 rests  
 Upon a sultry clond at eventide,  
 The Princess smiled, and on her  
 parted lips  
 Hung inarticulate applause; but she  
 Sudden was 'ware that all the hall  
 was mute  
 With blank disapprobation; and her  
 smile  
 Died, and vague fear was quickened  
 in her heart  
 As Walter of the Heron-chase be-  
 gan: —

"O fountain ever fair and bright,  
 He hath beheld thee, source of  
 Love,  
 Who sung thee springing from  
 above,  
 Celestial from the founts of Light.

“But he who from thy waters rare  
Hath thought to drain a gross de-  
light,

Blind in his spiritual sight,  
Hath ne'er beheld thee, fountain  
fair!

“Hath never seen the silver glow  
Of thy glad waves, crystalline  
clear,

Hath never heard within his ear  
The music of thy murmurous flow.

“The essence of all Good thou art,  
Thy waters are immortal Ruth,  
Thy murmurs are the voice of  
Truth,

And music in the human heart:

“Thou yieldest Faith that soars  
on high,

And Sympathy that dwells on  
earth;

The tender trust in human worth,  
The hope that lives beyond the  
sky.

“Oh! waters of the living Word,  
Oh! fair vouchsafed us from  
above,

Oh! fountain of immortal Love,  
What song of thee erewhile I  
heard!

“Learn, sacrilegious bard, from  
me

How all ignoble was thy strain,  
That sought with trivial song to  
stain

The fountain of Love's purity;

“That fountain thou hast never  
found,

And shouldst thou come with lips  
of fire

To slake the thirst of brute De-  
sire.

'Twould shrink and shrivel to the  
ground:

“Who seeks in Love's pure stream  
to lave

His gross heart, finds damnation  
near;

Who laves in Love his spirit clear  
Shall win Salvation from the  
wave.”

And now again, as when the plain-  
tive lay

Of Wolfram warbled to harmonious  
close,

The crowd grew glad with plaudits:  
and again

Tannhäuser, ruffled, rose his height  
and snote

Rude in the chords his prelude of  
reply:—

“What Love is this that melts  
with Ruth,

Whose murmurs are the voice of  
Truth?

Ye dazed singers, cease to dream,  
And learn of me your human  
theme:

Of that great Passion at whose  
feet

The vassal-world lies low,  
Of Love the mighty, Love the  
sweet,

I sing, who reigns below;  
Who makes men fierce, tame,

wild, or kind,  
Sovran of every mood,

Who rules the heart, and rules the  
mind,

And courses through the blood:  
Slave of that levish Power I sing,

Dispenser of all good,  
Whose pleasure-fountain is the  
spring

Of sole beatitude.

‘Sing ye of Love ye ne'er pos-  
sessed

In wretched tropes—a vain em-  
ployment!

I sing the passion in my breast,  
And know Love only in Enjoy-  
ment.”

To whom, while all the rustling hall  
was moved

With stormy indignation, stern up-  
rose,

Sharp in retort, Sir Wilfrid of the Hills:

“Up, minstrels! rally to the cry  
Of outraged Love and Loyalty;  
Drive on this slanderer, all the throng,

And slay him in a storm of song.  
O lecher! shall I sing to thee  
Of Love's untainted purity,  
Of simple Faith, and tender Ruth,  
Of Chastity and loyal Truth?

As well sing Day's resplendent birth

To the blind mole that delves the earth,

As seek from gross hearts, sloughed in sin,

Approval of pure Love to win!  
Rather from thee I'll wring applause

For Love, the Avenger of his cause;

Great Love, the chivalrous and strong,

To whose wide grasp all arms belong,

The lance, the battle-axe, and thong,—

And eke the mastery in song.

“Love in my heart in all the pride  
Of kinghood sits, and at his side,  
To do the bidding of his lord,  
Martial Valor holds the sword;  
He strikes for honor, in the name  
Of Virtue and fair woman's fame,  
And bids me shed my dearest blood

To avenge asperséd maidenhood:  
Who soils her with licentious lie,  
Him will I hew both hip and thigh,

Or in her cause will dearly die.

But thou, who in thy flashy song  
Hast sought to do *all* Honor wrong,

Pass on,—I will not stoop my crest

To smite thee, nor lay lance in rest.

Thy brawling words, of riot born,  
Are worthy only of my scorn;

Thus at thy ears this song I fling,  
Which in thy heart may plant its sting,

If ruined Conscience yet may wring  
Remorse from such a guilty thing.”

Scarce from his lips had parted the last word

When, through the rapturous praise that rang around,

Fierce from his seat, uprising, red with rage,

With scornful lip, and contumelious eye,

Tannhäuser clanged among the chords, and sang:

“Floutest thou me, thou grisly Bard?

Beware, lest I the just reward  
On thy puffed insolence bestow,  
And cleave thee with my falchion's blow,—

When I in song have laid thee low.  
I serve a Mistress mightier far  
Thau tinkling rill, or twinkling star,

And, as in my great Passion's glow  
Thy passion-dream will melt like snow,

So I, Love's champion, at her call,  
Will make thee shrink in field or hall,

And roll before me like a ball.

“Thou pauper-minded pedant dim,

Thou starveling-soul, lean heart and grim,

Wouldst thou of Love the praises hymn?

Then let the gaunt hyena howl  
In praise of Pity; let the owl  
Whoop the high glories of the noon,

And the hoarse chough becroak the moon!

What canst thou prate of Love?  
I trow

She never graced thy open brow,  
Nor flushed thy cheek, nor blossomed fair

Upon thy parted lips; nor e'er  
Bade unpent passion wildly start  
Through the forced portals of  
thy heart

To stream in triumph from thine  
eye,

Or else delicious death to die  
On other lips, in sigh on sigh.

"Of Love, dispenser of all bliss,  
Of Love, that crowns me with a  
kiss,

I here proclaim me champion-  
knight;

And in her cause will dearly fight  
With sword or song, in hall or  
plain,

And make the welkin ring again  
With my fierce blows, or fervent  
strain.

But for such Love as thou canst  
feel,

Thou wisely hast abjured the steel,  
Averse to lay thy hand on hilt,  
On in her honor ride a tilt:

Tame Love full tamely may'st  
thou jilt,

And keep bone whole, and blood  
unspilt."

Out flushed Sir Wilfrid's weapon,  
and out leapt

From every angry eye a thousand  
darts

Of unsheathed indignation, and a  
shout

Went up among the rafters, and the  
Hall

Swayed to and fro with tumult; till  
the voice

Of our liege lord roared "Peace!"  
and, midst the clang

Of those who parted the incensed  
bards,

Sounded the harp of Wolfram.  
Calm he stood,

He only calm of all the brawling  
crowd

Which yet, as is its wont, contagion  
caught

From neighboring nobleness, and a  
stillness fell

On all, and in the stillness soft he  
sang:

"O, from your sacred seats look  
down,

Angels and ministers of good;  
With sanctity our spirits crown,  
And crush the vices of the blood!

"Open our hearts and set them  
free,

That heavenly light may enter in;  
And from this fair society  
Obliterate the taint of sin.

"Thee, holy Love, I bid arise  
Propitious to my votive lay;  
Shine thou upon our darkened  
eyes,

And lead us on the perfect way;

"As, in the likeness of a Star,  
Thou once arodest, guidance meet,  
And led'st the sages from afar  
To sit at holy Jesu's feet:

"So guide us, safe from Satan's  
snares,

Shine out, sweet Star, around,  
above,

Till we have scaled the mighty  
stairs,

And reached thy mansions, Heav-  
enly Love!"

Then, while great shouts went up of  
"Give the prize

To Wolfram," leapt Tannhäuser  
from his seat,

Fierce passion flaming from his lus-  
trous orbs.

And, as a sinner, desperate to add  
Depth to damnation by one latest  
crime,

Dies boastful of his blasphemies—  
even so,

Tannhäuser, conscious of the last  
disgrace

Incurred by such song in such company,  
 Intent to vaunt the vastness of his sin,  
 Thus, as in ecstasy, the song renewed:

“Goddess of Beauty, thee I hymn,  
 And ever worship at thy shrine;  
 Thou, who on mortal senses dim  
 Descending, makest man divine.

“Who hath embraced thee on thy throne,  
 And pastured on thy royal kiss,  
 He, happy, knows, and knows alone,  
 Love’s full beatitude of bliss.

“Grim bards, of Love who nothing know,  
 Now cease the unequal strife between us;  
 Dare as I dared; to Hörsel go,  
 And taste Love on the lips of Venus.”

Uprose on every side and rustled down  
 The affrighted dames; and, like the shuddering crowd  
 Of party-colored leaves that flits before  
 The gust of mid October, all at once  
 A hundred jewelled shoulders, huddling, swept  
 The hall, and slanted to the doors, and fled  
 Before the storm, which now from shaggy brows  
 ’Gan dart indignant lightnings. One alone  
 Of all that awe-struck womanhood remained,  
 The Princess. She, a purple harebell frail,  
 That, swathed with whirlwind, to the bleak rock clings  
 When half a forest falls before the blast,  
 Rooted in utter wretchedness, and robed

In mockery of splendid state, still sat;  
 Still watched the waste that widened in her life;  
 And looked as one that in a nightmare hangs  
 Upon an edge of horror, while from beneath  
 The creeping billow of calamity  
 Sprays all his hair with cold; but hand or foot  
 He may not move, because the formless Fear  
 Gapes vast behind him. Grief within the void  
 Of her stark eyes stood tearless: terror blanched  
 Her countenance; and, over cloudy brows,  
 The shaken diamond made a restless light,  
 And trembled as the trembling star that hangs  
 O’er Cassiopeia i’ the windy north.

But now, from farthest end to end of all  
 The sullen movement swarming underneath,  
 Uprolled deep hollow groans of growing wrath.  
 And, where erewhile in rainbow crescent ranged  
 The bright-eyed beauties of the court, fast thronged  
 Faces inflamed with wrath, that rose and fell [tween  
 Tumultuously gathering from be-  
 Sharp-slanting lanes of steel. For every sword  
 Flashed bare upon a sudden; and over these,  
 Through the wide bursten doors the sinking sun  
 Streamed lurid, lighting up that steely sea;  
 Which, spotted white with foamy plumes, and ridged  
 With glittering iron, clashed together and closed

<p>About Tannhäuser. Careless of the wrath Roused by his own rash song, the singer stood; [fooled Rapt in remembrance, or by fancy A visionary Venus to pursue, With eyes that roamed in rapture the blank air. Until the sharp light of a hundred swords Smote on the fatal trance, and scat- tered all [sheath Its fervid fascination. Swift from Then leapt the glaive and glittered in his hand, And warily, with eye upon the watch, Receding to the mighty main sup- port That, from the centre, propped the ponderous roof, There, based against the pillar, front- ing full His sudden foes, he rested resolute, Awaiting assault. But, hollow as a bell, That tolls for tempest from a storm- clad tower, Rang through the jangling shock of arms and men The loud voice of the Landgrave. Wide he swept The solemn sceptre, crying "Peace!" then said:</p> <p>"Ye Lieges of Thuringia! whose just scorn, In judgment sitting on your right- eous brows, Would seem to have forecast the dubious doom Awaiting our decision; ye have heard, Not wrung by torture from your reluctant lips, Nor yet breathed forth with peni- tential pain In prayer for pardon, nay, but rather fledged And barbed with boasted insolence, such a crime</p>	<p>Confest, as turns to burning coals of wrath The dewy eyes of Pity, nor to Hope One refuge spares, save such as rests perchance Within the bounteous bosom of the Church; Who, caring for the frailty of her flock, Holds mercy measureless as heaven is high. Shuddering, ourselves have listened to what breaks All bonds that bound to this un- happy man The covenanted courtesies of knights, [fast The loyalties of lives by faith knit In spiritual communion. What be- hooves, After deliberation, to award In sentence, I to your high council leave, Undoubting. What may mitigate in aught The weight of this acknowledged infamy Weigh with due balance. What to justice stern Mild-minded mercy yet may reconcile Search inly. Not with rashness, not in wrath, Invoking from the right hand of high God His dread irrevocable angel, Death; Yet not unwary how one spark of hell, If unextinguished down the night of time May, like the wreckers' beacon from the reefs, Lure many to destruction: nor indeed [steel Unmindful of the doom by fire or This realm's supreme tribunals have reserved For those that, dealing in damna- tion, hold Dark commerce with the common foe of man.</p>
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Weigh you in all its circumstance  
 this crime:  
 And, worthily judging, though your  
 judgment be  
 As sharp as conscience, be it as con-  
 science clear."

He ended: and a bitter interval  
 Of silence o'er the solemn hall cou-  
 gealed,

Like frost on a waste water, in a  
 place

Where rocks confront each other.

Marshalled round,

Black-bearded cheek and chin, with  
 hand on heft

Bent o'er the pommels of their  
 planted swords

A dreary cirque of faces ominous,  
 The sullen barons on each other  
 stared

Significant. As, ere the storm de-  
 scends

Upon a Druid grove, the great trees  
 stand

Looking one way, and stiller than  
 their wont,

Until the thunder, rolling, frees the  
 wind

That rocks themaltogether; even so,  
 That savage circle of grim-gnarled  
 men,

Awhile in silence storing stormy  
 thoughts,

Stood breathless; till a murmur  
 moved them all,

And louder growing, and louder,  
 burst at last

To a universal irrepressible roar  
 Of voices roaring, "Let him die the  
 death!"

And, in that roar released, a hundred  
 swords

Rushed forward, and in narrowing  
 circle sloped

Sharp rims of shining horror round  
 the doomed,

Undaunted minstrel. Then a pite-  
 ous cry;

And from the purple baldachin down  
 sprang

The princess, gleaming like a ghost,  
 and slid

Among the swords, and standing in  
 the midst

Swept a wild arm of prohibition  
 forth.

Cowering, recoiled the angry, baffled  
 surge,

Leaving on either side a horrid hedge  
 Of rifted glare, as when the Red Sea  
 waves

Hung heaped and sundered, ere they  
 roaring fell

On Egypt's chariots. So there came  
 a hush;

And in the hush her voice, heavy  
 with scorn:

"Or shall I call you men? or beasts?  
 who seem

No nobler than the bloodhound and  
 the wolf

Which scorn to prey upon their  
 proper kind!

Christians I will not call you! who  
 defraud

That much-misapprehended holy  
 name

Of reverence due by such a deed as,  
 done,

Will clash against the charities of  
 Christ,

And make a marred thing and a  
 mockery

Of the fair face of Mercy. You  
 dull hearts,

And hard! have ye no pity for your  
 selves?

For man no pity? man whose com-  
 mon cause

Is shamed and saddened by the stain  
 that falls

Upon a noble nature! You blind  
 hands,

Thrust out so fast to smite a fallen  
 friend!

Did ye not all conspire, whilst yet  
 he stood [forth

The stateliest soul among you, to set  
 And fix him in the foremost ranks

of men?



Content that he, your best, should  
 bear the brunt,  
 And head the van against the scorn-  
 ful fiend  
 That will not waste his weapons on  
 the herd,  
 But saves them for the noblest.  
 And shall He'll  
 Triumph through you, that triumph  
 in the shame  
 Of this eclipse that blots your  
 brightest out,  
 And leaves you dark in his extin-  
 guished light?  
 O, who that lives but hath withiu  
 his heart  
 Some cause to dread the suddenness  
 of death?  
 And God is merciful; and suffers us,  
 Even for our sins' sake; and doth  
 spare us time,  
 Time to grow ready, time to take  
 farewell!  
 And send us monitors and minis-  
 ters —  
 Old age, that steals the fullness  
 from the veins;  
 And griefs, that take the glory from  
 the eyes;  
 And pains, that bring us timely news  
 of death;  
 And tears, that teach us to be glad  
 of him. [sins  
 For who can take farewell of all his  
 Of such a sudden summons to the  
 grave?  
 Against high Heaven hath this man  
 sinned, or you?  
 O, if it be against high Heaven, to  
 Heaven  
 Remit the compt! lest, from the  
 armory  
 Of the Eternal Justice ye pluck  
 down,  
 Heedless, that bolt the Highest yet  
 withholds  
 From this low-fallen head, — how  
 fallen! how low!  
 Yet not so fallen, not so low fallen,  
 but what

Divine Redemption, reaching every  
 where,  
 May reach at last even to this  
 wretchedness,  
 And, out of late repentance, raise it  
 up  
 With pardon into peace.”  
 She paused: she touched,  
 As with an angel's finger, him whose  
 pride  
 Obdurate now had yielded, and he  
 laid  
 Vanquished by Pity, broken at her  
 feet.  
 She, lingering, waited answer, but  
 none came  
 Across the silence. And again she  
 spake:  
 “O, not for him alone, and not for  
 that  
 Which to remember now makes life  
 for me  
 A wilderness of homeless griefs, I  
 plead  
 Before you; but, O Princes, for  
 yourselves;  
 For all that in your nobler nature  
 stirs  
 To vindicate Forgiveness and en-  
 large [you,  
 The lovely laws of Pity! Which of  
 Here in the wituess of all-judging  
 God,  
 Stands spotless? Which of you  
 will boast himself  
 More miserably injured by this  
 man  
 Than I, whose heart of all that  
 lived in it  
 He hath untenanted? O, horrible!  
 Unheard of! from the blessed lap  
 of life [sins,  
 To send the soul, asleep in all her  
 Down to perdition! Be not yours  
 the hands  
 To do this desperate wrong in sight  
 of all  
 The ruthless faces of the Saints in  
 Heaven.”

<p>She passionately pleading thus, her voice Over their hearts moved like that earnest wind That, laboring long against some great nigh cloud, Sets free, at last, a solitary star, Then sinks; but leaves the night not all forlorn The soft rain o'ercomes it.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">This long while</p> <p>Wolfram, whose harp and voice were overborne By burly brawlers in the turbulence That shook that stormy senate, stood apart With vainly-vigilant eye, and writhen hands, All in mute trouble: too gentle to approve, Too gentle to prevent, what passed: and still Divided himself 'twixt sharpest grief [drear To see his friend so fallen, and a Strange horror of the crime where- by he fell. So, like a headland light that down dark waves Shines o'er some sinking ship it fails to save, Looked the pale singer down the hurid hall. But when the pure voice of Eliza- beth Ceased, and clear-lighted all with noble thoughts Her face glowed as an angel's, the sweet Bard, Whose generous heart had sealed with that loved voice Up to the lofty levels where it ceased, Stood forth, and from the dubious silence caught And carried up the purpose of her prayer; [heart, And drew it out, and drove it to the and clenched it with conviction in the mind,</p>	<p>And fixed it firm in judgment. From deep muse The Landgrave started, toward Tannhäuser strode, And, standing o'er him with an eye wherein Salt sorrow and a moody pity gleamed, Spake hoarse of utterance: "Arise! go forth! Go from us, mantled in the shames which make Thee, stranger whom mine eye henceforth abhors, The mockery of the man I loved, and mourn. Go from these halls yet holy with the voice Of her whose intercession for thy sake, — If any sacred sorrow yet survive All ruined virtues, — in remorse shall steep Thy memory of her wrongs. For thee remains One hope, unhappiest! reject it not. There goeth a holy pilgrimage to Rome, Which not yet from the borders of our land Is parted; pious souls and meek, whom thou Haply may'st join, and of those holy hands, Which sole have power to bind or loose, receive [alone Remission of thy sin. For save The hand of Christ's high Vicar upon earth A hurt so heinous what may heal? What save A soul so fallen? Go forth upon thy ways, Which are not ours: for we no more may mix Congenial minds in converse sweet, no more [hear Together pace these halls, nor ever Thy harp as once when all was pure and glad,</p>
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Among the days which have been.  
 All thy paths  
 Henceforth be paths of penitence  
 and prayer,  
 Whilst over ours thy memory mov-  
 ing makes  
 A shadow, and a silence in our talk.  
 Get thee from hence, O all that now  
 remains  
 Of one we honored! Till the hand  
 that holds  
 The keys of heaven hath oped for  
 thee the doors  
 Of life in that far distance, let mine  
 eye  
 See thee no more. Go from us!"

Even then,

Even whilst he spake, like some  
 sweet miracle,  
 From darkening lands that glim-  
 mered through the doors  
 Came, faintly heard along the filmy  
 air  
 That bore it floating near, a choral  
 chant  
 Of pilgrims pacing by the castle  
 wall;  
 And "*salvum me fac Domine*" they  
 sung  
 Sonorous, in the ghostly going out  
 Of the red-litten eve along the land.  
 Then, like a hand across the heart  
 of him  
 That heard it moved that music  
 from afar,  
 And beckoned forth the better hope  
 which leads  
 A man's life up along the rugged  
 road  
 Of high resolve. Tannhäuser moved,  
 as moves  
 The folded serpent smitten by the  
 spring  
 And stirred with sudden sunlight,  
 when he casts  
 His spotted skin, and, renovated,  
 gleams  
 With novel hues. One lingering  
 long look,

Wild with remorse and vague with  
 vast regrets,  
 He lifted to Elizabeth. His thoughts  
 Were then as those dumb creatures  
 in their pain  
 That makes a language of a look.  
 He tossed  
 Aloft his arms, and down to the  
 great doors  
 With drooped brows striding, groan-  
 ed "To Rome, to Rome!"  
 Whilst the deep hall behind him  
 caught the cry  
 And drove it clamorous after him,  
 from all  
 Its hollow roofs reverberating  
 "Rome!"

A fleeting darkness through the  
 lurid arch;  
 A flying form along the glare be-  
 yond;  
 And he was gone. The scowling  
 Eve reached out  
 Across the hills a fiery arm, and  
 took  
 Tannhäuser to her, like a sudden  
 death.  
 So ended that great battle of the  
 Bards,  
 Whereof some rumor to the end of  
 time  
 Will echo in this land.

And, voided now

Of all his multitudes, the mighty  
 Hall,  
 Dumb, dismally dispageanted, laid  
 bare  
 His ghostly galleries to the mournful  
 moon;  
 And Night came down, and Silence  
 and the twain  
 Mingled beneath the starlight.  
 Wheeled at will  
 The flitter-wingéd bat round lonely  
 towers  
 Where, one by one, from darkening  
 casements died  
 The taper's shine; the howlet from  
 the hills

<p>Whooped; and Elizabeth, alone with Night And Silence, and the Ghost of her slain youth, Lay lost among the ruins of that day.</p> <p>As when the buffeting gusts, that adverse blow Over the Carribbean Sea, conspire Conflicting breaths, and, savagely begot, The fierce tornado rotatory wheels, Or sweeps centripetal, or, all forces joined, Whirls circling o'er the maddened waves, and they Lift up their foaming backs beneath the keel Of some frail vessel, and, careering high Over a sunken rock, with a sudden plunge Confound her, — stunned and strained, upon the peak, Poising one moment, ere she for- ward fall To float, dishelmed, a wreck upon the waves: So rose, engendered by what furious blasts Of passion, that fell hurricane that swept Elizabeth to her doom, and left her now A helmless hull upon the savage seas Of life, without an aim, to float for- lorn.</p> <p>Longwhile, still shuddering from the shock that jarred The bases of her being, piteous wreck Of ruined hopes, upon her couch she lay, Of life and time oblivious; all her mind, Locked in a rigid agony of grief, Clasping, convulsed, its unwept woe; her heart</p>	<p>Writhing and riven; and her bur- thened brain Blind with the weight of tears that would not flow. But when, at last, the healing hand of Time Had wrought repair upon her shat- tered frame: And those unskilled physicians of the mind — Importunate, fond friends, a host of kin — Drew her perforce from solitude, she passed Back to the world, and walked its weary ways With dull mechanic motions, such as make A mockery of life. Yet gave she never, By weeping or by wailing, outward sign Of that great inward agony that she bore; For she was not of those whose sternest sorrow Outpours in plaints, or weeps itself in dew; Not passionate she, nor of the happy souls Whose grief comes tempered with the gift of tears. So, through long weeks and many a weary moon, Silent and self-involved, without a sigh, She suffered. There, whence con- solation comes, She sought it — at the foot of Jesu's cross, And on the bosom of the Virgin spouse, And in communion with the blessed Saints. But chief for him she prayed whose grievous sin Had wrought her desolation; God besought To touch the leprous soul and make it clean;</p>
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And sued the Heavenly Pastor to re-  
 call  
 The lost sheep, wandering from the  
 pleasant ways,  
 Back to the pasture of the paths of  
 peace.  
 So thrice a day, what time the blush-  
 ing morn  
 Crimsoned the orient sky, and when  
 the sun  
 Glared from mid-heaven or weltered  
 in the west,  
 Fervent she prayed; nor in the night  
 forewent  
 Her vigils; till at last from prayer  
 she drew  
 A calm into her soul, and in that  
 calm  
 Heard a low whisper—like the  
 breeze that breaks  
 The deep peace of the forest ere the  
 chirp  
 Of earliest bird salutes the advent  
 Day—  
 Thrill through her, herald of the  
 dawn of Hope.  
 Then most she loved from forth her  
 leafy tower  
 Listless to watch the irrevocable  
 clouds  
 Roll on, and daylight waste itself  
 away  
 Along those dreaming woods,  
 whence evermore  
 She mused, “He will return;” and  
 fondly wove  
 Her webs of wistful fantasy till the  
 moon  
 Was high in heaven, and in its light  
 she kneeled,  
 A faded watcher through the weary  
 night,  
 A meek, sweet statue at the silver  
 shrines,  
 In deep, perpetual prayer for him  
 she loved.  
 And from the pitying Sisterhood of  
 Saints  
 Haply that prayer shall win an angel  
 down

To be his unseen minister, and draw  
 A drowning conscience from the  
 deeps of Hell.  
 Time put his sickle in among the  
 days.  
 Blithe Summer came, and into  
 dimples danced  
 The fair and fructifying Earth, anon  
 Showering the gathered guerdon of  
 her play  
 Into the lap of Autumn; Autumn  
 stored  
 The gift, piled ready to the palsied  
 hand  
 Of blind and begging Winter; and  
 when he  
 Closed his well-provendered days,  
 Spring lightly came  
 And scattered sweets upon his sul-  
 len grave.  
 And twice the seasons passed, the  
 sisters three  
 Doing glad service for their hoary  
 brother,  
 And twice twelve moons had waxed  
 and waned, and twice  
 The weary world had pilgrimed  
 round the sun,  
 When from the outskirts of the land  
 there came  
 Rumor of footsore penitents from  
 Rome  
 Returning, jubilant of remitted sin.  
 So chanced it, on a silent April eve  
 The westering sun along the Wart-  
 burg vale  
 Shot level beams, and into glory  
 touched  
 The image of Madonna, — where it  
 stands  
 Hard by the common way that climbs  
 the steep, —  
 The image of Madonna, and the face  
 Of meek Elizabeth turned towards  
 the Queen  
 Of Sorrows, sorrowful in patient  
 prayer:  
 When, through the silence and the  
 sleeply leaves,

A breeze blew up the vale, and on  
 the breeze  
 Floated a plaintive music. She that  
 heard,  
 Trembled; the prayer upon her  
 parted lips  
 Suspended hung, and one swift hand  
 she pressed  
 Against the palpitating heart whose  
 throbs  
 Confused the cunning of her ears.  
 Ah God! [joy?  
 Was this the voice of her returning  
 The psalm of shriven pilgrims to  
 their homes  
 Returning? Ay! it swells upon the  
 breeze  
 The "*Nunc Dimittis*" of glad souls  
 that sue  
 After salvation seen to part in peace.  
 Then up she sprung, and to a neigh-  
 boring copse  
 Swift as a startled hind, when the  
 ghostly moon  
 Draws sudden o'er the silvered  
 heather-bells  
 The monstrous shadow of a cloud,  
 she sped;  
 Pausing, low-crouched, within a  
 maze of shrubs,  
 Whose emerald slivers fringed the  
 rugged way  
 So broad, the pilgrims' garments as  
 they passed  
 Would brush the leaves that hid her.  
 And anon  
 They came in double rank, and two  
 by two,  
 With cumbered steps, with haggard  
 gait that told  
 Of bodily toil and trouble, with be-  
 soiled  
 And tattered garments; nathless  
 with glad eyes,  
 Whence looked the soul disburthened  
 of her sin,  
 Climbing the rude path, two by two  
 they came.  
 And she, that watched with what  
 intensest gaze

Them coming, saw old faces that  
 she knew,  
 And every face turned skywards,  
 while the lips  
 Poured out the heavenly psalm, and  
 every soul  
 Sitting seraphic in the upturned eyes  
 With holy fervor rapt upon the song,  
 And still they came and passed, and  
 still she gazed;  
 And still she thought, "Now comes  
 he!" and the chant  
 Went heavenwards, and the filed  
 pilgrims fared  
 Beside her, till their tale wellnigh  
 was told.  
 Then o'er her soul a shuddering hor-  
 ror crept, [makes  
 And, in that agony of mind that  
 Doubt more intolerable than despair,  
 With sudden hand she brushed aside  
 the sprays,  
 And from the thicket leaned and  
 looked. The last [ken  
 Of all the pilgrims stood within the  
 Of her keen gaze, — save him all  
 scanned, and he  
 No sooner scanned than cancelled  
 from her eyes  
 By vivid lids swept down to lash  
 away  
 Him hateful, being other than she  
 sought.  
 So for a space, blind with dismay,  
 she paused,  
 But, he approaching, from the  
 thicket leapt,  
 Clutched with wrung hands his robe,  
 and gasped, "The Knight  
 That with you went, returns not?"  
 In his psalm  
 The fervid pilgrim made no pause,  
 yet gazed  
 At his wild questioner, intelligent  
 Of her demand, and shook his head  
 and passed.  
 Then she, with that mute answer  
 stabbed to the heart,  
 Sprung forward, clutched him y<sup>e</sup>  
 ounce more, and cried.

" In Mary's name, and in the name  
 of God,  
 Received the knight his shrift?"  
 And, once again,  
 The pilgrim, sorrowful, shook his  
 head and sighed,  
 Sighed in the singing of his psalm,  
 and passed.  
  
 Then prone she fell upon her face,  
 and prone  
 Within her mind Hope's shattered  
 fabric fell, —  
 The dear and delicate fabric of frail  
 Hope  
 Wrought by the simple cunning of  
 her thoughts,  
 That, laboring long, through many  
 a dreamy day  
 And many a vigil of the wakeful  
 night,  
 Piecemeal had reared it, patiently,  
 with pain, [peace.  
 From out the ruins of her ancient  
 O ancient Peace! that never shalt  
 return;  
 O ruined hope! O Fancy! over-  
 fond,  
 Futile artificer that build'st on air,  
 Marred is thy handiwork, and thou  
 shalt please  
 With plastic fantasies her soul no  
 more.  
  
 So lay she cold against the callous  
 ground,  
 Her pale face pillowed on a stone,  
 her eyes  
 Wide open, fixed into a ghastly stare  
 That knew no speculation; for her  
 mind  
 Was dark, and all her faculty of  
 thought  
 Compassionately cancelled. But  
 she lay  
 Not in the embrace of loyal Death,  
 who keeps  
 His bride forever, but in treacherous  
 arms  
 Of Sleep that, sated, will restore to  
 Grief

Her, snatched a sweet space from  
 his cruel clutch,  
 So lay she cold against the callous  
 ground,  
 And none was near to heed her, as  
 the sun,  
 About him drawing the vast-skirted  
 clouds,  
 Went down behind the western hill  
 to die.  
  
 Now Wolfram, when the rumor  
 reached his ears  
 That, from their quest of saving  
 grace returned,  
 The pilgrims all within the castle-  
 court  
 Were gathered, flocked about by  
 happy friends,  
 Passed from his portal swiftly, and  
 ran out  
 And joined the clustering crowd.  
 Full many a face,  
 Wasted and wan, he recognized, and  
 clasped  
 Full many a lean hand clutching at  
 his own,  
 Of those who, stretched upon the  
 grass, or propped  
 Against the boulder-stones, were  
 pressed about  
 By weeping women, clamorous to  
 unbind  
 Their sandal-thongs and bathe the  
 bruised feet.  
 Then up and down, and swiftly  
 through and through,  
 And round about, skirting the  
 crowd, he hurried,  
 With greetings fair to all; till, filled  
 with fear,  
 Half-hopeless of his quest, yet har-  
 boring hope,  
 He paused perplexed beside the  
 castle gates.  
 There, at his side, the youngest of  
 the train, [him  
 A blue-eyed pilgrim tarried, and to  
 Turned Wolfram questioning of  
 Tannhäuser's fate,

<p>And learnt in few words how, his sin pronounced Deadly and irremediable, the knight Had faded from before the awful face Of Christ's incenséd Vicar; and none knew Whither he wandered, to what des- olate lands, Hiding his anguish from the eyes of men. Then Wolfram groaned, and clasped his hands, and cried, "Merciful God!" and fell upon his knees In purpose as of prayer, — but, sud- denly, About the gate the crowd moved, and a cry Went up for space, when, rising, he beheld Four maids who on a pallet bore the form [grew Of wan Elizabeth. The whisper That she had met the pilgrims, and had learned Tannhäuser's fate, and fallen beside the way. And Wolfram, in the ghastly torch- light, saw The white face of the Princess turned to his, And for a space their eyes met; then she raised One hand towards Heaven, and smiled as who should say, "O friend, I journey unto God; farewell!" But he could answer nothing; for his eyes Were blinded by his tears, and through his tears Dimly, as in a dream, he saw her borne Up the broad granite steps that wind within The palace; and his inner eye, en- tranced, Saw in a vision four great Angels stand,</p>	<p>Expectant of her spirit, at the foot Of flights of blinding brilliancy of stairs Innumerable, that through the riven skies Scaled to the City of the Saints of God. Then, when thick night fell on his soul, and all The vision fled, he solitary stood A crazéd man within the castle- court; Whence issuing, with wild eyes and wandering gait He through the darkness, groaning, passed away. All that lone night, along the haunted hills, By dizzy brinks of mountain pre- cipices, He fled, aimless as an unused wind That wastes itself about a wilder- ness. Sometimes from low-browed caves, and hollow crofts, Under the hanging woods there came and went [air, A voice of wail upon the midnight As of a lost soul mourning; and the voice Was still the voice of his remem- bered friend. Sometimes (so fancy mocked the fears she bred!) He heard along the lone and eery land Low demon laughters; and a sullen strain Of horror swelled upon the breeze; and sounds Of wizard dance, with shawm and timbrel, flew Ever betwixt waste air and wander- ing cloud O'er pathless peaks. Then, in the distance tolled, Or seemed to toll, a knell: the breezes dropped;</p>
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<p>And, in the sudden pause, that          passing bell          With ghostly summons bade him          back return          To where, till dawn, a shade among          the shades          Of Wartburg, watching one lone          tower, he saw          A light that waned with all his          earthly hopes.          The calm Dawn came and from the          eastern cliff,          Athwart the glistening slopes and          cold green copse,          Called to him, careless of a grief          not hers;          But he, from all her babbling birds,          and all          Her vexing sunlight, with a weary          heart          Drew close the darkness of the glens          and glades          About him, flying through the forest          deeps.          And day and night, dim eve and          dewy dawn,          Three times returning, went un-          cared for by;          And thrice the double twilights rose          and fell          About a land where nothing seemed          the same, [by.          At eve or dawn, as in the time gone          But, when the fourth day like a          stranger slipped          To his unhonored grave, God's          Angel passed          Across the threshold of the Land-          grave's hall,          And in his bosom bore to endless          peace          The weary spirit of Elizabeth.          Then, in that hour, when Death with          gentle hand          Had drooped the quiet eyelids o'er          the eyes          That Wolfram loved, to Wolfram's          heart there came          A calmness like the calmness of a          grave</p>	<p>Walled safe from all the noisy walks          of men          In some green place of peace where          daisies grow.          His tears fell in the twilight with          the dews,          Soft as the dews that with the twi-          light fell,          When, over scarred and weather-          wounded walls,          Sharp-jaggéd mountain cones, and          tangled quicks,          Eve's spirit settling, laid the land          to sleep          In skyeey trance. Nor yet less soft          to fuse          Memory with hope, and earth with          heaven, to him,          Athwart the harsher anguish of that          day,          There stole with tears the tender          human sense          Of heavenly mercy. Through that          milder mood,          Like waifs that float to shore when          storms are spent,          Flowed to his heart old memories of          his friend,          O'erwoven with the weed of other          griefs,          Of other griefs for her that grieved          no more —          And of that time when, like a blaz-          ing star          That moves and mounts between the          Lyre and Crown,          Tannhäuser shone; ere sin came,          and with sin          Sorrow. And now if yet Tannhäu-          ser lived          None knew: and if he lived, what          hope in life?          And if he lived no more, what rest          in death?          But every way the dreadful doom of          sin. [tery          Thus, musing much on all the mys-          Of life, and death, and love that wil'          not die, [war          He wandered forth, incurious of the</p>
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Which took the wont of other days,  
 and wound  
 Along the valley. Now the nodding  
 star  
 Of even, and the deep, the dewy  
 hour  
 Held all the sleeping circle of the  
 hills;  
 Nor any cloud the stainless heavens  
 obscured,  
 Save where, o'er Hürsel folded in  
 the frown  
 Of all his wicked woods, a fleecy  
 fringe  
 Of vapor veiled the slowly sinking  
 moon.  
 There, in the shade, the stillness,  
 o'er his harp  
 Leaning, of love, and life, and death  
 he sang  
 A song to which from all her æry  
 caves  
 The mountain echo murmured in  
 her sleep.  
 But, as the last strain of his solemn  
 song  
 Died off among the solitary stars,  
 There came in answer from the  
 folded hills  
 A note of human woe. He turned,  
 he looked  
 That way the sound came o'er the  
 lonely air;  
 And, seeing, yet believed not that  
 he saw;  
 But, nearer moving, saw indeed  
 hard by,  
 Dark in the darkness of a neighbor-  
 ing hill,  
 Lying among the splintered stones  
 and stubs  
 Flat in the fern, with limbs dif-  
 fused as one  
 That, having fallen, cares to rise no  
 more, [age  
 A pilgrim; all his weeds of pilgrim-  
 Hanging and torn, his sandals  
 stained with blood  
 Of bruised feet, and, broken in his  
 hand,

His wreathed staff.  
 And Wolfram wistfully  
 Looked in his face, and knew it not.  
 "Alas!  
 Not him," he murmured, "not my  
 friend!" And then,  
 "What art thou, pilgrim? whence  
 thy way? how fall'n  
 In this wild glen? at this lone hour  
 abroad  
 When only Grief is stirring?" Unto  
 whom [grass,  
 That other, where he lay in the long  
 Not rising, but with petulant ges-  
 ture, "Hence!"  
 Whate'er I am, it skills not. Thee  
 I know  
 Full well, Sir Wolfram of the Wil-  
 lowbrook,  
 The well-beloved Singer!"  
 Like a dart  
 From a friend's hand that voice  
 through Wolfram went:  
 For Memory over all the ravaged  
 foun-  
 Wherefrom it issued, wandering  
 failed to find  
 The man she mourned; but Wol-  
 fram, to the voice  
 No stranger, started smit with pain,  
 as all  
 The past on those sharp tones came  
 back to break  
 His heart with hopeless knowledge,  
 And he cried,  
 "Alas, my brother!" Such a  
 change, so drear,  
 In all so unlike all that once he was  
 Showed the lost knight Tannhäuser,  
 where he lay  
 Fallen across the split and morselled  
 crags  
 Like a dismantled ruin. And Wol-  
 fram said,  
 "O lost! how comest thou, unab-  
 solved, once more  
 Among these valleys visited by  
 death,  
 And shadowed with the shadow of  
 thy sin?"

Whereto in scorn Tannhäuser, "Be  
at rest,  
O fearful in thy righteousness! not  
thee,  
Nor grace of thine, I seek."

Speaking, he rose

The spectre of a beauty waned away;  
And, like a hollow echo of himself  
Mocking his own last words, he mur-  
mured, "Seek!

Alas! what seek I here, or any-  
where?

Whose way of life is like the crum-  
bled stair

That winds and winds about a  
ruined tower,

And leads nowhither!"

But Wolfram cried, "Yet turn!  
For, as I live, I will not leave thee  
thus. [voice

My life shall be about thee, and my  
Lure sacred Hope back to find a  
resting-place

Even in the jaws of Death. I do  
adjure thee,

By all that friendship yet may claim,  
declare

That, even though unabsolved, not  
uncontrue,

Thy soul no more hath lapsed into  
the snare

Of that disastrous sorcery. Bid me  
hail,

Seen through the darkness of thy  
desolation,

Some light of purer purpose; since  
I deem

Not void of purpose hast thou sought  
these paths

That range among the places of the  
past;

And I will make defeat of Grief  
with such [arm

True fellowship of tears as shall dis-  
sill right hand of its scorpions; nor  
in vain

My prayers with thine shall batter at  
the gates

Of Mercy, through all antagonisms  
of fate

Forcing sharp inlet to her throne in  
Heaven."

Wherewith Tannhäuser, turning tear-  
less eyes

On Wolfram, murmured mourn-  
fully, "If tears

Fiery as those from fallen seraphs  
distilled,

Or centuries of prayers for pardon  
sighed

Sad, as of souls in purgatorial  
glooms,

Might soften condemnation, or re-  
store

To her, whom most on earth I have  
offended,

The holy freight of all her innocent  
hopes

Wrecked in this ruined venture, I  
would weep

Salt oceans from these eyes. But I  
no more

May drain the deluge from my heart,  
no more

On any breath of sigh or prayer re-  
build

The rainbow of dis-covenanted Hope.  
Thou, therefore, Wolfram—for her

face, when mine

Is dark forever, thine eyes may still  
behold—

Tell her, if thou unblamed may'st  
speak of one

Signed cross by the curse of God  
and cancelled out,

How, at the last, though in remorse  
of all

That makes allegiance void and  
valueless,

To me has come, with knowledge of  
my loss,

Faalty to that pure passion, once  
betrayed,

Wherewith I loved, and love her."

There his voice,  
Even as a wave that, touching on  
the shore

To which it travelled, is shivered  
and diffused,

Sank, scattered into spray of waste-  
ful sighs,  
And back dissolved into the deeper  
grief.

To whom, Wolfram, "O answer by  
the faith  
In which mankind are kindred, art  
thou not

From Rome, unhappiest?" "From  
Rome? ah me!"

He muttered, "Rome is far off,  
very far,

And weary is the way!" But un-  
deterred

Wolfram renewed, "And hast thou  
not beheld

The face of Christ's High Vicar?"  
And again,

"Pass on," he muttered, "what is  
that to thee?"

Whereto, with sorrowful voice,  
Wolfram, "O all,

And all in all to me that love my  
friend!"

"My friend!" Tannhäuser laughed  
a bitter laugh,

Then sadder said, "What thou  
wouldst know, once known,

Will cause thee to recall that wasted  
word

And cancel all the kindness in thy  
thoughts; [learn

Yet shalt thou learn my misery, and  
The man so changed, whom once

thou calledst 'friend,'  
That unto him the memory of him-  
self

is as a stranger." Then, with eyes  
that swam

True sorrow, Wolfram stretched his  
arms and sought

To clasp Tannhäuser to him: but  
the other

Waved him away, and with a shout  
that sprang

Fierce with self-scorn from misery's  
deepest depth,

"Avaunt!" he cried, the ground  
whereon I tread

Is ground accurst!

"Yet stand not so far off  
But what thine ears, if yet they will,  
may take

The tale thy lips from mine have  
sought to learn;

Then, sign thyself, and peaceful go  
thy ways."

And Wolfram, for the grief that  
choked his voice,

Could only murmur "Speak!" But  
for a while

Tannhäuser to sad silence gave his  
heart;

Then fetched back some far thought,  
sighing, and said:—

"O Wolfram, by the love of lovelier  
days

Believe I am not so far fallen away  
From all I was while we might yet

be friends,  
But what these words, haply my  
last, are true:

True as my heart's deep woe what  
time I felt

Cold on my brow tears wept, and  
wept in vain,

For me, among the scorn of altered  
friends,

Parting that day for Rome. Re-  
member this:

That when, in after years to which  
I pass

A by-word, and a mockery, and no  
more,

Thou, honored still by honorable  
men,

Shalt hear my name dishonored,  
thou may'st say,

'Greatly he grieved for that great  
sin he sinned.'

"Ever, as up the windy Alpine way,  
We halting oft by cloudy convent  
doors,

My fellow-pilgrims warmed them-  
selves within,

And ate and drank, and slept their  
sleep, all night,

I, fasting, slept not; but in ice and snow  
 Wept, aye remembering her that wept for me,  
 And loathed the sin within me.  
 When at length  
 Our way lay under garden terraces  
 Strewn with their dropping blossoms, thick with scents,  
 Among the towers and towns of Italy,  
 Whose sumptuous airs along them, like the ghosts  
 Of their old gods, went sighing, I nor looked  
 Nor lingered, but with bandaged eyeballs prest,  
 Impatient, to the city of the shrine  
 Of my desired salvation. There by night  
 We entered. There, all night, forlorn I lay  
 Bruised, broken, bleeding, all my garments torn,  
 And all my spirit stricken with remorse,  
 Prostrate beneath the great cathedral stairs.  
 So the dawn found me. From a hundred spires  
 A hundred silvery chimes rang joy: but I  
 Lay folded in the shadow of my shame,  
 Darkening the daylight from me in the dust.  
 Then came a sound of solemn music flowing  
 To where I crouched; voices and trampling feet; [nals,  
 And, girt by all his crimson cardinal in all his pomp the sovran Pontiff stood  
 Before me in the centre of my hopes;  
 Which trembled round him into glorious shapes,  
 Golden, as clouds that ring the risen sun. [fell  
 And all the people, all the pilgrims,

Low at his sacred feet, confessed their sins,  
 And, pardoned, rose with psalms of jubilee  
 And confident glad faces.  
 Then I sprang  
 To where he paused above me; with wild hands  
 Clutched at the skirts I could not reach; and sank  
 Shiveringly back; crying, 'O holy, and high,  
 And terrible, that hast the keys of heaven!  
 Thou that dost bind and dost unloose, from me,  
 For Mary's sake, and the sweet saints', unbind  
 The grievous burthen of the curse I bear.'  
 And when he questioned, and I told him all  
 The sin that smouldered in my blood, how bred,  
 And all the strangeness of it, then his face [I hid  
 Was as the Judgment Angel's; and My own; and, hidden from his eyes, I heard:  
 "Hast thou within the nets of Satan lain?  
 Hast thou thy soul to her perdition pledged?  
 Hast thou thy lip to Hell's Enchantress lent,  
 To drain damnation from her reeking cup?  
 Then know that sooner from the withered staff  
 That in my hand I hold green leaves shall spring,  
 Than from the brand in hell-fire scorched rebloom  
 The blossoms of salvation.'  
 The voice ceased,  
 And, with it all things from my sense. I waked  
 I know not when, but all the place was dark:

Above me, and about me, and with-  
 in  
 Darkness: and from that hour by  
 moon or sun  
 Darkness unutterable as of death  
 Where'er I walk. But death him-  
 self is near!  
 O, might I once more see her, un-  
 seen; unheard,  
 Hear her once more; or know that  
 she forgives  
 Whom Heaven forgives not, nor his  
 own lost peace;  
 I think that even among the nether  
 fires  
 And those dark fields of Doom to  
 which I pass,  
 Some blessing yet would haunt me."  
 Sorrowfully  
 He rose among the tumbled rocks  
 and leaned  
 Against the dark. As one that many  
 a year,  
 Sundered by savage seas unsociable  
 From kin and country, in a desert  
 isle  
 Dwelling till half dishumanized, be-  
 holds  
 Haply, one eve a far-off sail go by,  
 That brings old thoughts of home  
 across his heart;  
 And still the man who thinks —  
 "They are all gone  
 Or changed, that loved me once, and  
 I myself  
 No more the same" — watches the  
 dwindling speck  
 With weary eyes, nor shouts, nor  
 waves a hand;  
 But after, when the night is left  
 alone, [feels  
 A sadness falls upon him, and he  
 More solitary in his solitudes  
 And tears come starting fast; so,  
 tearful, stood  
 Tannhäuser, whilst his melancholy  
 thoughts, [hope,  
 From following up far off a waning  
 Back to himself came, one by one,  
 more sad

Because of sadness troubled.  
 Yet not long  
 He rested thus; but murmured,  
 "Now, farewell:  
 I go to hide me darkly in the groves  
 That she was wont to haunt; where  
 some sweet chance  
 Haply may yield me sight of her,  
 and I  
 May stoop, she passed away, to kiss  
 the ground [die."  
 Made sacred by her passage ere I  
 But him departing Wolfram held,  
 "Vain! vain!  
 Thy footstep sways with fever, and  
 thy mind  
 Wavers within thy restless eyes.  
 Lie here,  
 O unrejected, in my arms, and  
 rest!"

Now o'er the cumbrous hills began  
 to creep  
 A thin and watery light: a whisper  
 went  
 Vague through the vast and dusky-  
 volumed woods,  
 And, unaccompanied, from a drowsy  
 copse  
 Hard by a solitary chirp came cold,  
 While, spent with inmost trouble,  
 Tannhäuser leaned  
 His wan cheek pillowed upon Wol-  
 fram's breast,  
 Calm, as in death, with placid lids  
 down locked.  
 And Wolfram prayed within his  
 heart, "Ah, God!  
 Let him not die, not yet, not thus,  
 with all  
 The sin upon his spirit!" But  
 while he prayed  
 Tannhäuser raised delirious looks,  
 and sighed,  
 "Hearest thou not the happy songs  
 they sing me?  
 Seest thou not the lovely floating  
 forms?  
 O fair, and fairer far than fancy  
 fashioned!

O sweet the sweetness of the songs  
they sing!

*For thee, . . . they sing . . . the  
goddess waits: for thee*

*With braided blooms the balmy  
couch is strewn,*

*And loosed for thee . . . they sing  
. . . the golden zone.*

*Fragrant for thee the lighted spices  
fume*

*With streaming incense sweet, and  
sweet for thee*

*The scattered rose, the myrtle crown,  
the cup,*

*The nectar-cup for thee! . . . they  
sing. Return,*

*Though late, too long desired, . . .  
I hear them sing,*

*Delay no more delights too long de-  
layed:*

*Turn to thy rest; . . . they sing . . .  
The married doves*

*Murmur; the Fays soft-sparkling  
tapers tend;*

*The odors burn the purple bowers  
among;*

*And love for thee, and Beauty,  
waits! . . . they sing."*

"Ah me! ah madman!" Wolfram  
cried, "yet cram

Thy cheated ears, nor chase with  
credulous heart

The fair dissembling of that dream.  
For thee

Not roses now, but thorns; nor  
myrtle wreath,

But cypress rather and the grave-  
yard flower

Befitting saddest brows; nor nectar  
poured,

But prayers and tears! For thee in  
yonder skies

An Angel strives with Sin and Death!  
for thee [own:

Yet pleads a spirit purer than thine  
For she is gone! gone to the breast  
of God!

Thy Guardian Angel, while she  
walked the earth.

Thine intercessionary Saint while  
now

For thee she sues about the Throne  
of Thrones,

Beyond the stars, our star, Eliza-  
beth!"

Then Wolfram felt the shattered  
frame that leaned

Across his breast with sudden spasms  
convulsed.

"Dead! is she dead?" Tannhäuser  
murmured, "dead!

Gone to the grave, so young! mur-  
dered—by me!

Dead—and by my great sin! O Wol-  
fram, turn

Thy face from mine. I am a dying  
man!"

And Wolfram answered, "Dying?  
ah, not thus!

Yet make one sign thou dost repent  
the past,

One word, but one! to say thou hast  
abhorred

That false she-devil that, with her  
damnéd charms,

Hath wrought this ruin; and I,  
though all the world

Roar out against thee, ay! though  
fiends of hell

Howl from the deeps, yet I, thy  
friend, even yet

Will cry them 'Peace!' and trust  
the hope I hold

Against all desperate odds, and deem  
thee saved."

Whereto Tannhäuser, speaking  
faintly, "Friend,

The fiend that haunts in ruins  
through my heart

Will wander sometimes. In the nets  
I trip,

When most I fret the meshes. These  
spent shafts [awry,

Arc of a sickly brain that shoots  
Aiming at something better. Bear  
with me.

I die: I pass I know not whither:  
yet know

<p>That I die penitent. O Wolfram,          pray,          Pray for my soul! I cannot pray          myself.  <b>I dare not hope:</b> and yet I would          not die [faint          Without a hope, if any hope, though          And far beyond this darkness, yet          may dwell          In the dear death of Him that died          for all."          He whispering thus; far in the          Aureorean East          The ruddy sun, uprising, sharply          smote          A golden finger on the airy harps          By Morning hung within her leafy          bowers;          And all about the budded dells, and          woods          With sparkling tasselled tops, from          birds and brooks          A hundreð hallelujahs hailed the          light.          The whitethorn glistened from the          wakening glen:          O'er golden gravel danced the dawn-          ing rills          All the delighted leaves by copse          and glade          Gambolled; and breezy bleatings          came from flocks [dew.          Far off in pleasant pastures fed with</p> <p>But whilst, unconscious of the          silent change          Thus stolen around him, o'er the          dying bard          Hung Wolfram, on the breeze there          came a sound          Of mourning moving down the nar-          row glen;          And, looking up, he suddenly was          'ware          Of four white maidens, moving in          the van          Of four black monks who bore upon          her bier          The flower-strewn corpse of young          Elizabeth,</p>	<p>And after these, from all the castled          hills,          A multitude of lieges and lords;          A multitude of men-at-arms, with          all          Their morions hung with mourning,          and in midst          His worn cheek channelled with un-          wonted tears,          The Laudgrave, weeping for Eliza-          beth.          These, as the sad procession nearer          wound,          And nearer, trampling bare the          feathery weed          To where Sir Wolfram rested o'er          his friend,          Tannhäuser caught upon his dying          gaze;          And caught, perchance, upon the          inward eye,          Far, far beyond the corpse, the bier,          and far [sun,          Beyond the widening circle of the          Some sequel of that vision Wolfram          saw:          The crownéd Spirit by the Jaspur          Gates;          The four white Angels o'er the walls          of Heaven,          The shores where, tideless, sleep          the seas of Time          Soft by the City of the Saints of God.</p> <p>Forth, with the strength that lastly          comes to break          All bonds, from Wolfram's folding          arm he leapt,          Clambered the pebbly path, and          groaning, fell [at last.          Flat on the bier of love — his bourn          Then, even then, while question          question chased          About the ruffled circle of that grief,          And all was hubbub by the bier, a          noise          Of shouts and hymns brake in across          the hills,          That now o'erflowed with hurrying          feet; and came,</p>
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<p>Dashed to the hip with travel, and dewed with haste, A flying post, and in his hand he bore A withered staff o'erflourished with green leaves; Who,—followed by a crowd of youth and eld, That sang to stun with sound the lark in heaven, “A miracle! a miracle from Rome! Glory to God that makes the bare bough green!”— Sprang in the midst, and, hot for answer, asked News of the Knight Tarnhäuser. Then a monk Of those that, stoled in sable, bore the bier Pointing, with sorrowful hand, “Be- hold the man!” But straight the other, “Glory be to God! This from the Vicar of the fold of Christ: The withered staff hath flourished into leaves, The brand shall bloom, though burned with fire, and thou —Thy soul from sin be saved!” To whom, with tears That flashed from lowering lids, Wolfram replied: “To him a swifter message, from a source Mightier than whence thou comest, hath been vouchsafed. See these dark hands, blind eyes, and bloodless lips, This shattered remnant of a once fair form, [husk Late home of desolation, now the And ruined chrysalis of a regal spirit That up to heaven hath parted on the wing! But thou, to Rome returning with hot speed, [Christ Tell the high Vicar of the Fold of How that lost sheep his rescuing hand would reach,</p>	<p>Although by thee unfound, is found indeed, And in the Shepherd's bosom lies at peace.” And they that heard him lifted up the voice And wept. But they that stood about the hills Far off, not knowing, ceased not to cry out, “Glory to God that makes the bare bough green!” Till Echo, from the inmost heart of all That mellowing morn blown open like a rose To round and ripea to the perfect noon, Resounded, “Glory! glory!” and the rocks From glen to glen rang, “Glory unto God!” And so those twain, severed by Life and Sin, By Love and Death united, in one grave Slept. But Sir Wolfram passed into the wilds: There, with long labor of his hands, he hewed A hermitage from out the hollow rock, Wherein he dwelt, a solitary man. There, many a year, at nightfall or at dawn, The pilgrim paused, nor ever paused in vain, For words of cheer along his weary way. But once, upon a windy night, men heard A noise of rustling wings, and at the dawn They found the hermit parted to his peace. The place is yet. The youngest pil- grim knows, And loves it. Three <b>gray</b> rocks: and, over these,</p>
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A mountain ash that, mourning,  
 bead by bead,  
 Drops her red rosary on a ruined cell.  
 So sang the Saxon Bard. And when  
 he ceased,

The women's cheeks were wet with  
 tears ; but all  
 The broad-blown Barons roared ap-  
 plause, and flowed  
 The jostling tankards prodigal of  
 wine.

## CLYTEMNESTRA.

### PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

AGAMEMNON.  
 ÆGISTHUS.  
 ORESTES.  
 PHOCIAN.  
 HERALD.

CLYTEMNESTRA.  
 ELECTRA.  
 CASSANDRA.  
 CHORUS.

SCENE.—*Before the Palace of Agamemnon in Argos. Trophies, amongst which the shield of Agamemnon, on the wall.*

TIME.—*Morning. The action continues till Sunset.*

#### I. CLYTEMNESTRA.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

MORNING at last ! at last the linger-  
 ing day  
 Creeps o'er the dewy side of yon  
 dark world.  
 O dawning light already on the hills !  
 O universal earth, and air, and thou,  
 First freshness of the east, which art  
 a breath  
 Breathed from the rapture of the  
 gods, who bless  
 Almost all other prayers on earth  
 but mine !  
 Wherefore to me is solacing sleep  
 denied ?  
 And honorable rest, the right of all ?  
 So that no medicine of the slumbrous  
 shell,  
 Brimmed with divinest draughts of  
 melody,

Nor silence under dreamful canopy,  
 Nor purple cushions of the lofty  
 couch  
 May lull this fever for a little while.  
 Wherefore to me,—to me, of all  
 mankind,  
 This retribution for a deed undone ?  
 For many men outlive their sum of  
 crimes,  
 And eat, and drink, and lift up thank-  
 ful hands,  
 And take their rest securely in the  
 dark.  
 Am I not innocent,—or more than  
 these ?  
 There is no blot of murder on my  
 brow,  
 Nor any taint of blood upon my robe.  
 —It is the thought ! it is the thought !  
 . . . and men  
 Judge us by acts ! . . . as though  
 one thunder-clap

Let all Olympus out. Unquiet heart,  
 Ill fares it with thee since, ten sad  
 years past, [joy,  
 In one wild hour of unacquainted  
 Thou didst set wide thy lonely  
 bridal doors  
 For a forbidden guest to enter in!  
 Last night, methought pale Helen,  
 with a frown,  
 Swept by me, murmuring, "I — such  
 as thou —  
 A Queen in Greece — weak-hearted,  
 (woe is me!)  
 Allured by love — did, in an evil hour,  
 Fall off from duty. Sorrow came.  
 Beware!"  
 And then, in sleep, there passed a  
 baleful band,  
 The ghosts of all the slaughtered  
 under Troy,  
 From this side Styx, who cried,  
 "For such a crime  
 We fell from our fair palaces on  
 earth,  
 And wander, starless, here. For  
 such a crime  
 A thousand ships were launched,  
 and tumbled down  
 The topless towers of Ilion, though  
 they rose  
 To magic music, in the time of  
 Gods!"  
 With such fierce thoughts forever-  
 more at war,  
 Vext not alone by hankering wild  
 regrets,  
 But fears, yet worse, of that which  
 soon must come,  
 My heart waits armed, and from the  
 citadel  
 Of its high sorrow, sees far off dark  
 shapes,  
 And hears the footsteps of Necessity  
 Tread near, and nearer, hand in hand  
 with Woe.  
 Last night the flaming Herald warn-  
 ing urged  
 Up all the hills, — small time to  
 pause and plan! [to do,  
 Counsel is weak: and much remains

That Agamemnon, and, if else re-  
 main  
 Of that enduring band who sailed  
 for Troy  
 Ten years ago (and some sailed  
 Letheward),  
 Find us not unprepared for their  
 return.  
 But — hark! I hear the tread of  
 nimble feet  
 That sounds this way. The rising  
 town is poured  
 About the festive altars of the Gods,  
 And from the heart of the great  
 Agora,  
 Lets out its gladness for this last  
 night's news.  
 — Ah, so it is! Insidious, sly Re-  
 port,  
 Sounding oblique, like Loxian  
 oracles,  
 Tells double-tongued (and with the  
 selfsame voice!)  
 To some new gladness, new despair  
 to some.

## II. CHORUS AND CLYTEMNESTRA.

### CHORUS.

O dearest Lady, daughter of Tyn-  
 darus!  
 With purple flowers we come, and  
 offerings —  
 Oil, and wine; and cakes of honey,  
 Soothing, unadulterate; tapestries  
 Woven by white Argive maidens,  
 God-descended (woven only  
 For the homeward feet of Heroes)  
 To celebrate this glad intelligence  
 Which last night the fiery courier  
 Brought us, posting up from Ilion,  
 Wheeled above the dusky circle  
 Of the hills from lighted Ida.  
 For now (Troy lying extinguish'd  
 Underneath a mighty Woe)  
 Our King and chief of men,  
 Agamemnon, returning  
 (And with him the hope of Argos)

Shall worship at the Tutelary Altars  
Of their dear native land :  
In the fane of ancient Herē,  
Or the great Lycæan God ;  
Immortally crowned with reverend  
honor !  
But tell us wherefore, O godlike  
woman,  
Having a lofty trouble in your eye,  
You walk alone with loosened  
tresses ?

## CLYTEMNESTRA.

Shall the ship toss, and yet the helm  
not heave ?  
Shall they drowse sitting at the  
lower oars,  
When those that hold the middle  
benches wake ? [state  
He that is yet sole eye of all our  
Shining not here, shall ours be shut  
in dreams ?  
But haply you (thrice happy !) prove  
not this,  
The curse of Queens, and worse  
than widowed wives —  
To wake, and hear, all night, the  
wandering gnat  
Sing through the silent chambers,  
while Alarm,  
In place of Slumber, by the haunted  
couch  
Stands sentinel ; or when from  
coast to coast  
Wails the night-wandering wind, or  
when o'er heaven  
Boötes hath unleashed his fiery  
hounds,  
And Night her glittering camps hath  
set, and lit  
Her watch-fires through the silence  
of the skies,  
— To count ill chances in the dark,  
and feel  
Deserted pillows wet with tears,  
not kisses,  
Where kisses once fell.  
But now Expectation  
Stirs up such restless motions of  
the blood

As suffer not my lids to harbor  
sleep.  
Wherefore, O beloved companions,  
I wake betimes, and wander up and  
down,  
Looking toward the distant hill-  
tops.  
From whence shall issue fair fulfil-  
ment  
Of all our ten-years' hoping. For,  
behold !  
Troy being captived, we shall see  
once more  
Those whom we loved in days of  
old.  
Yet some will come not from the  
Phyrgian shore,  
But there lie weltering to the surf  
and wind ;  
Exiled from day, in darkness blind,  
Or having crost unhappy Styx.  
And some who left us full of vigor-  
ous youth  
Shall greet us now gray headed  
men.  
But if our eyes behold again  
Our long-expected chief, in truth,  
Fortune for us hath thrown the  
Treble Six.

## CHORUS.

By us, indeed, these things are also  
wisht.  
Wherefore, if now to this great son  
of Atreus  
(Having survived the woeful walls  
of Troy),  
With us, once more, the Gods per-  
mit to stand  
A glad man by the pillars of his  
hearth,  
Let his dear life henceforth be such  
wherein  
The Third Libation often shall be  
poured.

## CLYTEMNESTRA.

And let his place be numbered with  
the Gods, [walls,  
Who overlook the world's eternal  
Out of all reach of sad calamities.

## CHORUS.

It is not well, I think, that men  
 should set  
 Too near the Gods any of mortal  
 kind :  
 But brave men are as Gods upon the  
 earth.

## CLYTEMNESTRA.

And whom Death daunts not, these  
 are truly brave.

## CHORUS.

But more than all I reckon that man  
 blest,  
 Who, having sought Death nobly,  
 finds it not.

## CLYTEMNESTRA.

Except he find it where he does not  
 seek.

## CHORUS.

You speak in riddles.

## CLYTEMNESTRA.

For so Wisdom speaks.  
 But now do you with garlands  
 wreathe the altars,  
 While I, within, the House prepare.  
 That so our King, at his returning,  
 With his golden armament,  
 Find us not unaware  
 Of the greatness of the event.

## CHORUS.

Soon shall we see the faces that we  
 loved.  
 Brother once more clasping brother,  
 As in the unforgotten days :  
 And heroes, meeting one another,  
 (Men by glorious toils approved)  
 Where once they roved,  
 Shall rove again the old familiar  
 ways.  
 And they that from the distance  
 come  
 Shall feed their hearts with tales of  
 home ;

And tell the famous story of the  
 war,  
 Rumored sometime from afar.  
 Now shall these again behold  
 The ancient Argos ; and the grove  
 Long since trod  
 By the frenzied child of Inachus ;  
 And the Forum, famed of old,  
 Of the wolf-destroying God ;  
 And the opulent Mycenæ,  
 Home of the Pelopidæ,  
 While they rove with those they  
 love.

Holding pleasant talk with us.  
 O how gloriously they went,  
 That avenging armament !  
 As though Olympus in her womb  
 No longer did entomb  
 The greatness of a bygone world—  
 Gods and godlike men—  
 But cast them forth again  
 To frighten Troy : such storm was  
 hurled

On her devoted towers  
 By the retributive Deity,  
 Whosoe'er he be  
 Of the Immortal Powers—  
 Or maddening Pan, if he chastise  
 His Shepherd's Phrygian treach-  
 eries ;  
 Or vengeful Loxias ; or Zeus,  
 Angered for the shame and abuse  
 Of a great man's hospitality.

As wide as is Olympus' span  
 Is the power of the high Gods ;  
 Who, in their golden blest abodes  
 See all things, looking from the sky ;  
 And Heaven is hard to pacify  
 For the wickedness of man.  
 My heart is filled with vague fore-  
 bodings,  
 And opprest by unknown terrors  
 Lest, in the light of so much glad-  
 ness,  
 Rise the shadow of ancient wrong.  
 A Dæmon of the double lineage  
 Of Tantalus ; and the Pleisthenidæ,  
 Inexorable in thy mood,  
 On the venerable threshold  
 Of the ancient House of Pelops

Surely is enough of blood !  
 Wherefore does my heart misgive  
 me ? [me ?  
 Wherefore comes this doubt to grieve  
 O, may no Divine Envy  
 Follow home the Argive army,  
 Being vexed for things ill-done  
 In wilful pride of stubborn war,  
 Long since, in the distant lands !  
 May no Immortal wrath pursue  
 Our dear King, the Light of Argos,  
 For the unhappy sacrifice  
 Of a daughter ; working evil  
 In the dark heart of a woman ;  
 Or some household teachery,  
 And a curse from kindred hands !

### III. CLYTEMNESTRA.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

[*Re-entering from the house.*

To-morrow . . . ay, what if to-day ?  
 . . . Well—then ?  
 Why, if those tongues of flame, with  
 which last night  
 The land was eloquent, spoke cer-  
 tain truth,  
 By this perchance through green  
 Saronic rocks  
 Those black ships glide . . . per-  
 chance . . . well, what's to  
 fear ?  
 'Twere well to dare the worst—to  
 know the end—  
 Die soon, or live secure. What's  
 left to add  
 To years of nights like those which  
 I have known ?  
 Shall I shrink now to meet one little  
 hour  
 Which I have dared to contemplate  
 for years ?  
 By all the Gods, not so ! The end  
 crowns all.  
 Which if we fail to seize, that's also  
 lost  
 Which went before : as who would  
 lead a host  
 Through desolate dry places, yet  
 return

In sight of kingdoms, when the Gods  
 are roused  
 To mark the issue ? . . . And yet,  
 yet—  
 I think  
 Three nights ago there must have  
 been sea-storms.  
 The wind was wild among the Pal-  
 ace towers :  
 Far off upon the hideous Element  
 I know it huddled up the petulant  
 waves,  
 Whose shapeless and bewildering  
 precipices  
 Led to the belly of Orcus . . . O, to  
 slip  
 Into dark Lethe from a dizzy plank,  
 When even the Gods are reeling on  
 the poop !  
 To drown at night, and have no sep-  
 ulchre !—  
 That were too horrible ! . . . yet it  
 may be  
 Some easy chance, that comes with  
 little pain,  
 Might rid me of the haunting of  
 those eyes,  
 And these wild thoughts . . . To  
 know he roved among  
 His old companions in the Happy  
 Fields,  
 And ranged with heroes—I still in-  
 nocent !  
 Sleep would be natural then.  
 Yet will the old time  
 Never return ! never those peaceful  
 hours !  
 Never that careless heart ! and never  
 more,  
 Ah, nevermore that laughter with-  
 out pain !  
 But I, that languish for repose, must  
 fly it,  
 Nor, save in daring, doing, taste of  
 rest.  
 O, to have lost all these ! To have  
 bartered calm,  
 And all the irrevocable wealth of  
 youth,  
 And gained . . . what ? But **this**  
 change had surely come,

Even were all things other than they are.

I blame myself o'ermuch, who should blame time,

And life's inevitable loss, and fate,  
And days grown lovelier in the retrospect.

We change : wherefore look back ?  
The path to safety

Lies forward . . . forward ever.

*[In passing toward the house she recognizes the shield of Agamemnon, and pauses before it.]*

Ha ! old shield,

Hide up for shame that honest face of thine.

Stare not so bluntly at us . . . O, this man !

Why sticks the thought of him so in my heart ?

If I had loved him once—if for one hour—

Then were there treason in this falling off.

But never did I feel this wretched heart

Until it leaped beneath Ægisthus' eyes.

Who could have so forecounted all from first ?

From that flusht moment when his hand in mine

Rested a thought too long, a touch too kind,

To leave its pulse unwarmed . . . but I remember

I dreamed sweet dreams that night, and slept till dawn,

And woke with flutterings of a happy thought,

And felt, not worse, but better . . . And now . . . now ?

When first a strange and novel tenderness

Quivered in these salt eyes, had one said then

"O bead of dew may drag a deluge down :"—

In that first pensive pause, through which I watched

Unwonted sadness on Ægisthus' brows,

Had some one whispered, " Ay, the summer-cloud

Comes first: the tempest follows."— Well, what's past

Is past. Perchance the worst's to follow yet.

How thou art hackt, and hewn, and bruised, old shield !

Was the whole edge of the war against one man ?

But one thrust more upon this dexter ridge

Had quite cut through the double inmost hide.

He must have stood to it well ! O, he was cast

I' the mould of Titans : a magnificent man,

With head and shoulders like a God's. He seemed

Too brimful of this merry vigorous life

To spill it all out at one stab o' the sword.

Yet that had helped much ill . . . O Destiny

Makes cowards or makes culprits of us all !

Ah, had some Trojan weapon . . . Fool ! fool ! fool !

Surely sometimes the unseen Eumenides

Do prompt our musing moods with wicked hints,

And lash us for our crimes ere we commit them.

Here, round this silver boss, he cut my name,

Once—long ago : he cut it as he lay Tired out with brawling pastimes—

prone—his limbs At length diffused—his head droopt

in my lap— His spear flung by : Electra by the hearth

Sat with the young Orestes on her knee ;

While he, with an old broken sword, hacked out

These crooked characters, and  
laughed to see  
(Sprawled from the unused strength  
of his large hands)

The marks make CLYTEMNESTRA.

How he laughed!  
Ægisthus' hands are smaller.

Yet I know  
That matrons envied me my hus-  
band's strength.

And I remember when he strode  
among

The Argive crowd he topped them  
by a head,

And tall men stood wide-eyed to  
look at him,

Where his great plumes went toss-  
ing up and down

The brazen proes drawn out upon  
the sand.

War on his front was graved, as on  
thy disk,

Shield! which he left to keep his  
memory

Grand in men's mouths: that some  
revered old man

Winning to this the eyes of our hot  
youth,

Might say, " 'Twas here, and here —  
this dent, and that —

And such, and such a field (which  
we remember) [time,

That Agamemnon, in the great old  
Held up the battle."

Now lie there, and rest!  
Thy uses all have end. Thy master's

home  
Should harbor none but friends.

O triple brass,  
Iron, and oak! the blows of blund-  
ering men

Clang idly on you: what fool's  
strength is yours!

For, surely, not the adamantine  
tunic [plates,

Of Ares, nor whole shells of blazing  
Nor ashen spear, nor all the cum-  
brous coil

Of seven bulls' hides may guard the  
strongest king

From one defenceless woman's quiet  
hate.

What noise was that? Where can  
Ægisthus be?

Ægisthus! — my Ægisthus! . . .

There again!

Louder, and longer — from the  
Agora —

A mighty shout: and now I see it  
the air

A rolling dust the wind blows near.  
Ægisthus!

O much I fear . . . this wild-willed  
race of ours

Doth ever, like a young unbroken  
colt,

Chafe at the straightened bridle of  
our state —

If they should find him lone, irreso-  
lute,

As is his wont . . . I know he lacks  
the eye

And forehead wherewith crowned  
Capacity

Awes rash Rebellion back.

Again that shout!  
God keep Ægisthus safe! myself

will front  
This novel storm. How my heart

leaps to danger!  
I have been so long a pilot on rough

seas,  
And almost rudderless!

O yet 'tis much  
To feel a power, self-centred, self-

assured, [one  
Bridling a glorious danger! as when

That knows the nature of the ele-  
ments

Guides some frail plank with sub-  
lime skill that wins

Progress from all obstruction; and,  
erect,

Looks bold and free down all the  
dripping stars,

Hearing the hungry storm boom  
baffled by.

Ægisthus! . . . hark! . . . Ægisthus!  
. . . there . . . Ægisthus!



I would to all the Gods I knew him  
safe!  
Who comes this way, guiding his  
racing feet  
Safe to us, like a nimble charioteer?

IV. CLYTEMNESTRA. HERALD.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Now, gloom-bird! are there prod-  
igies about?  
'What new ill-thing sent thee before?

HERALD.

O Queen —

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Speak, if thou hast a voice! I  
listen.

HERALD.

O Queen —

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Hath an ox trodden on thy tongue?  
. . . Speak then!

HERALD.

O Queen (for haste hath caught away  
my breath),  
The King is coming.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Say again — the King  
Is coming —

HERALD.

Even now, the broad sea-fields  
Grow white with flocks of sails, and  
towards the west  
The sloped horizon teems with ris-  
ing beaks.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

The people know this?

HERALD.

Heard you not the noise?  
For soon as this winged news had  
toucht the gate  
The whole land shouted in the sun.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

So soon!  
The thought's outsped by the  
reality,  
And halts agape . . . the King —

HERALD.

How she is moved.  
A noble woman!

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Wherefore beat so fast,  
Thou foolish heart? 'tis not thy  
master —

HERALD.

Truly  
She looks all over Agamemnon's  
mate.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Destiny, Destiny! The deed's half  
done.

HERALD.

She will not speak, save by that  
brooding eye  
Whose light is language. Some great  
thought, I see,  
Mounts up the royal chambers of  
her blood,  
As a king mounts his palace; holds  
high pomp  
In her Olympian bosom; gains her  
face,  
Possesses all her noble glowing  
cheek  
With sudden state; and gathers  
grandly up  
Its slow majestic meanings in her  
eyes!

CLYTEMNESTRA.

So quick this sudden joy hath taken  
us,  
I scarce can realize the sum of it.  
You say the King comes here, — the  
King, my husband,  
Whom we have waited for ten years,  
— O joy!

Pardon our seeming roughness at the first.  
 Hope, that will often fawn upon despair  
 And flatter desperate chances, when the event  
 Falls at our feet, soon takes a querulous tone,  
 And jealous of that perfect joy she guards  
 (Lest the ambrosial fruit by some rude hand  
 Be stol'n away from her, and never tasted),  
 Barks like a lean watch-dog at all who come.  
 But now do you, with what good speed you may,  
 Make known this glad intelligence to all.  
 Ourselves, within, as best befits a wife  
 And woman, will prepare my husband's house.  
 Also, I pray you, summon to our side  
 Our cousin, Ægisthus. We would speak with him.  
 We would that our own lips should be the first  
 To break these tidings to him ; so obtaining  
 New joy by sharing his. And, for yourself,  
 Receive our gratitude. For this great news  
 Henceforth you hold our royal love in fee.  
 Our fairest fortunes from this day I date,  
 And to the House of Tantalus new honor.

## HERALD.

She's gone ! With what a majesty she filled  
 The whole of space ! The statues of the Gods  
 Are not so godlike. She has Herë's eyes,  
 And looks immortal !

## V. CLYTEMNESTRA. CHORUS.

CLYTEMNESTRA (*as she ascends the steps of the Palace*).

So . . . while on the verge  
 Of some wild purpose we hang dizzily,  
 Weighing the danger of the leap below  
 Against the danger of retreating steps,  
 Upon a sudden, some forecast event,  
 Issuing full-armed from Councils of the Gods,  
 Strides to us, plucks us by the hair, and hurls  
 Headlong pale conscience to the abyss of crime.  
 Well—I shrink not. 'Tis but a leap in life.  
 There's fate in this. Why is he here so soon ?  
 The sight of whose abhorred eyes will add  
 Whatever lacks of strength to this resolve.  
 Away with shame ! I have had enough of it.  
 What's here for shame ? . . . the weak against the strong ?  
 And if the weak be victor ? . . . what of that ?  
 Tush ! . . . there,—my soul is set to it. What need  
 Of argument to justify an act  
 Necessity compels, and must absolve ?  
 I have been at play with scruples—like a girl.  
 Now they are all flung by. I have talked with Crime  
 Too long to play the prude. These thoughts have been  
 Wild guests by night. Now I shall dare to do  
 That which I did not dare to think . . . O, now  
 I know myself ! Crime's easier than we dream.

## CHORUS.

Upon the everlasting hills  
Thronéd Justice works, and waits.  
Between the shooting of a star,  
That falls unseen on summer nights  
Out of the bosom of the dark,  
And the magnificent march of War,  
Rolled from angry lands afar  
Round some dooméd city-gates,  
Nothing is to her unknown;

Nothing unseen.  
Upon her hills she sits alone,  
And in the balance of Eternity  
Poises against the What-has-been  
The weight of What-shall-be.  
She sums the account of human ills.  
The great world's hoarded wrongs  
and rights

Are in her treasures. She will mark,  
With inward-searching eyes sublime,  
The frauds of Time.

The empty future years she fills  
Out of the past. All human wills  
Sway to her on her reachless heights.

Wisdom she teaches men, with  
tears,

In the toilful school of years :  
Climbing from event to event.  
And, being patient, is content  
To stretch her sightless arms about,  
And find some human instrument,  
From many sorrows to work out  
Her doubtful, far accomplishment.

She the two Atridæ sent  
Upon Ilion; being intent  
The heapt-up wrath of Heaven to  
move

Against the faithless Phrygian crime.  
Them the Thunder-bird of Jove,  
Swooping sudden from above,  
Summoned to fates sublime.

She, being injured, for the sake  
Of her, the often-wedded wife,  
(Too loved, and too adoring!)  
Many a brazen band did break  
In many a breathless battle-strife;  
Many a noble life did take;

Many a headlong agony,  
Frenzied shout, and frantic cry,  
For Greek and Trojan storg.  
When, the spear in the onset being  
shivered,  
The reeling ranks were rolled to-  
gether

Like mad waves mingling in windy  
weather, [other:  
Dasht fearfully over and over each  
And the plumes of Princes were  
tossed and thrust,  
And dragged about in the shameful  
dust;

And the painful, panting breath  
Came and went in the tug of death :  
And the sinews were loosened, and  
the strong knees stricken :  
And the eyes began to darken and  
thicken :  
And the arm of the mighty and ter-  
rible quivered.

O Love! Love! Love! How terri-  
ble art thou!

How terrible!

O, what hast thou to do  
With men of mortal years,  
Who toil below,  
And have enough of griefs for tears  
to flow?

O, range in higher spheres!  
Hast thou, O hast thou, no diviner  
hues

To paint thy wings, but must trans-  
fuse

An Iris-light from tears?  
For human hearts are all too weak  
to hold thee.

And how, O Love, shall human arms  
infold thee?

There is a seal of sorrow on thy  
brow.

There is a deadly fire in thy breath.  
With life thou lures, yet thou givest  
death.

O Love, the Gods are weak by reason  
of thee;

And many wars have been upon the  
earth.

Thou art the sweetest source of  
saltest sorrows.

Thy blest to-days bring such unblest  
to-morrows;

Thy softest hope makes saddest  
memory.

Thou hadst destruction in thee from  
the birth;

Incomprehensible!

O Love, thy brightest bridal gar-  
ments

Are poisoned, like that robe of ag-  
onies

Which Deianira wove for Hercules,  
And, being put on, turn presently  
to cerements!

Thou art unconquered in the fight.

Thou rangest over land and sea.

O let the foolish nations be!

Keep thy divine desire

To upheave mountains or to kindle  
fire

From the frore frost, and set the  
world alight.

Why make thy red couch in the  
damask cheek?

Or light thy torch at languid eyes?

Or lie entangled in soft sighs

On pensive lips that will not speak?

To sow the seeds of evil things

In the hearts of headstrong kings?

Preparing many a kindred strife

For the fearful future hour?

O leave the wretched race of man,  
Whose days are but the dying sea-  
sous' span;

Vex not his painful life!

Make thy immortal sport

In heaven's high court,

And cope with Gods that are of  
equal power.

VI. ELECTRA. CHORUS. CLY-  
TEMNESTRA.

ELECTRA.

Now is at hand the hour of retribu-  
tion,

For my father, at last returning,  
In great power, being greatly in-  
jured,  
Will destroy the base adulterer,  
And efface the shameful Past.

CHORUS.

O child of the Godlike Agamemnon,  
Leave vengeance to the power of  
Heaven;

Nor forestall with impious footsteps  
The brazen tread of black Erinnyes.

ELECTRA.

Is it, besotted with the adulterous  
sin,

Or, as with flattery pleasing present  
power,

Or, being intimidate, you speak  
these words?

CHORUS.

Nay, but desiring justice, like your-  
self.

ELECTRA.

Yet Justice oft times uses mortal  
means.

CHORUS.

But flings aside her tools when work  
is done.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

O dearest friends, inform me, went  
this way

Ægisthus?

CHORUS.

Even now, hurrying hitherward  
I see him walk, with irritated eyes.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

A reed may show which way the  
tempest blows.

That face is pale,—those brows are  
dark . . . ah!

VII. ÆGISTHUS. CLYTEMNESTRA.

ÆGISTHUS.

Agamemnon —

CLYTEMNESTRA.

My husband . . . well?

ÆGISTHUS.

(Whom may the great Gods curse!)  
Is scarce an hour hence.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Then that hour's yet saved  
From sorrow. Smile, Ægisthus —

ÆGISTHUS.

Hear me speak.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Not as your later wont has been to  
smile —

Quick, fierce, as though you scarce  
could hurry out

The wild thing fast enough; for  
smiling's sake,

As if to show you could smile, though  
in fear

Of what might follow, — but as first  
you smiled

Years, years ago, when some slow  
loving thought

Stole down your face, and settled  
on your lips,

As though a sunbeam halted on a  
rose,

And mixed with fragrance, light.

Can you smile still

Just so, Ægisthus?

ÆGISTHUS.

These are idle words,  
And like the wanderings of some  
fevered brain:

Extravagant phrases, void of import,  
wild.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Ah, no! you cannot smile so, more.  
Nor I!

ÆGISTHUS.

Hark! in an hour the King —

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Hush! listen now, —  
I hear, far down you vale, a shepherd  
piping

Hard by his milk-white flock. The  
lazy things!

How quietly they sleep or feed among  
The dry grass and the acanthus  
there! . . . and he.

He hath flung his faun-skin by, and  
white-ash stick,

You hear his hymn? Something of  
Dryope.

Faunus and Pan . . . an old wood  
tale, no doubt!

It makes me think of songs when I  
was young

I used to sing between the valleys  
there,

Or higher up among the red ash-  
berries,

Where the goats climb, and gaze.  
Do you remember

That evening when we lingered all  
alone,

Below the city, and one yellow star  
Shook o'er you temple? . . . ah,  
and you said then,

“Sweet, should this evening never  
change to night,

But pause, and pause, and stay just  
so, — you star

Still steadfast, and the moon behind  
the hill,

Still rising, never risen, — would this  
seem strange?

Or should we say, ‘why halts the  
day so late?’”

Do you remember?

ÆGISTHUS.

Woman! woman! this  
Surpasses frenly! Not a breath of  
time

Between us and the clutch of  
Destiny, —  
Already sound there footsteps at our  
heels,  
Already comes a heat against our  
cheek,  
Already fingers cold among our hair,  
And you speak lightly thus, as  
though the day  
Lingered toward nuptial hours! . . .  
awake! arouse!

CLYTEMNESTRA.

I do wake . . . well, the King —

ÆGISTHIUS.

Even while we speak  
Draws near. And we —

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Must meet him.

ÆGISTHIUS.

Meet? ay . . . how?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

As mortals should meet fortune —  
calmly.

ÆGISTHIUS.

Quick!  
Consult! consult! Yet there is time  
to choose  
The path to follow.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

I have chosen it  
Long since.

ÆGISTHIUS.

How? —

CLYTEMNESTRA.

O, have we not had ten years  
To ripen counsel, and mature re-  
solve?  
What's to add now?

ÆGISTHIUS.

I comprehend you not.  
The time is plucking at our sleeve.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Ægisthus,  
There shall be time for deeds, and  
soon enough,  
Let that come when it may. And it  
may be

Deeds must be done shall shut and  
shrivel up

All quiet thoughts, and quite pre-  
clude repose

To the end of time. Upon this  
awful strait

And promontory of our mortal life  
We stand between what was, and is  
not yet.

The Gods allot to us a little space,  
Before the contests which must  
soon begin,

For calmer breathing. All before  
lies dark,

And difficult, and perilous, and  
strange;

And all behind . . . What if we take  
one lock,

One last long lingering look (before  
Despair,

The shadow of failure, or remorse,  
which often

Waits on success, can come 'twixt  
us and it,

And darken all) at that which yet  
must seem

Undimmed in the long retrospect of  
years, —

The beautiful imperishable Past!

Were this not natural, being im-  
cent now

—At least of that which is the greater  
crime!

To-night we shall not be so.

ÆGISTHIUS.

Ah, to-night!

CLYTEMNESTRA.

All will be done which now the Gods  
foresee.

The sun shines still.

ÆGISTHUS.

I oft have marked some day  
Begin all gold in its flusht orient,  
With splendid promise to the wait-  
ing world,  
And turn to blackness ere the sun  
ran down.  
So draws our love to its dark close.  
To-night —

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Shall bring our bridals, my Beloved!  
For, either  
Upon the melancholy shores of  
Death  
(One shadow near the doors of Pluto)  
greeted  
By bale Proserpina, our steps shall  
be,  
Or else, secure, in the great empty  
palace  
We shall sleep crowned — no noise  
to startle us —  
And Argos silent round us — all our  
own!

ÆGISTHUS.

In truth I do not dare to think this  
thing.  
For all the Greeks will hate us.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

What of that?  
If that they do not harm us, — as  
who shall?

ÆGISTHUS.

Moreover, though we triumph in the  
act  
(And we may fail, and fall) we shall  
go down  
Covered with this reproach into the  
tomb,  
Hunted by all the red Eumenides;  
And, in the end, the ghost of him we  
slew,  
Being beforehand there, will come  
between  
Us and the awful Judges of the  
dead!

And no one on this earth will pray  
for us;  
And no hand will hang garlands on  
our urns,  
Either of man, or maid, or little  
child;  
But we shall be dishonored.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

O faint heart!

When this poor life of ours is done  
with — all  
Its foolish days put by — its bright  
and dark —  
Its praise and blame — rolled quite  
away — gone o'er  
Like some brief pageant — will it stir  
us more,  
Where we are gone, how men may  
hoot or shout  
After our footsteps, then the dust  
and garlands  
A few mad boys and girls fling in  
the air  
When a great host is passed, can  
cheer or vex  
The minds of men already out of  
sight  
Toward other lands, with pæan and  
with pomp  
Arrayed near vaster forces? For  
the future,  
We will smoke hecatombs, and build  
new fanes,  
And be you sure the gods deal  
leniently  
With those who grapple for their  
life, and pluck it  
From the close grip of Fate, albeit  
perchance  
Some ugly smutch, some drop of  
blood or so,  
A spot here, there a streak, or stain  
of gore,  
Should in the contest fall to them,  
and mar  
That life's original whiteness.

ÆGISTHUS.

Tombs have tongues

That talk in Hades. Think it!  
Dare we hope,  
This done, to be more happy?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

My Beloved,  
We are not happy, — we may never  
be,  
Perchance, again. Yet it is much  
to think  
We have been so: and even though  
we must weep,  
We have enjoyed.

The roses and the thorns  
We have plucked together. We  
have proved both. Say,  
Was it not worth the bleeding hands  
they left us  
To have won such flowers? And if  
'twere possible  
To keep them still, — keep even the  
withered leaves,  
Even the withered leaves are worth  
our care.

We will not tamely give up life, —  
such life!  
What though the years before, like  
those behind,  
Be dark as clouds the thunder sits  
among,  
Tipt only here and there with a wan  
gold  
More bright for rains between? —  
'tis much, — 'tis more,  
For we shall ever think "the sun's  
behind.

The sun must shine before the day  
goes down!"  
Anything better than the long, long  
night, [tomb!  
And that perpetual silence of the  
'Tis not for happier hours, but life  
itself

Which may bring happier hours, we  
strike at Fate.

Why, though from all the treasury  
of the Past

'Tis but one solitary gem we save —  
One kiss more such as we have kist,  
one smile,

One more embrace, one night more  
such as those

Which we have shared, how costly  
were the prize,

How richly worth the attempt! In-  
deed, I know,

When yet a child, in those dim  
pleasant dreams

A girl will dream, perchance in  
twilit hours,

Or under eve's first star (when we  
are young [near!

Happiness seems so possible, — so  
One says, "it must go hard, but I  
shall find it!")

Ofttimes I mused, — "My life shall  
be my own,

To make it what I will." It is their  
fault

(I thought) who miss the true de-  
lights. I thought

Men might have saved themselves:  
they flung away,

Too easily abasht, life's opening  
promise:

But all things will be different for  
me.

For I felt life so strong in me!  
indeed

I was so sure of my own power to  
love

And to enjoy, — I had so much to  
give,

I said, "be sure it must win some-  
thing back!"

Youth is so confident! And though  
I saw

All women sad, — not only those I  
knew,

As Helen (whom from youth I  
knew, nor ever

Divined that sad impenetrable smile  
Which oft would darken through  
her lustrous eyes,

As drawing slowly down o'er her  
cold cheek

The yellow braids of odorous hair,  
she turned

From Menelaus praising her, and  
sighed, —



That was before he, flinging bitterly  
 down  
 The trampled parsley-crown and  
 undrained goblet,  
 Cursed before all the Gods his sud-  
 den shame  
 And young Hermione's deserted  
 youth!)  
 Not only her,—but all whose lives I  
 learned,  
 Medea, Deianira, Ariadne,  
 And many others,—all weak,  
 wronged, opprest,  
 Or sick and sorrowful, as I am  
 now,—  
 Yet in their fate I would not see my  
 own, [law  
 Nor grant allegiance to that general  
 From which a few, I know a very  
 few,  
 With whom it seemed I also might  
 be numbered,  
 Had yet escaped securely:—so ex-  
 empting  
 From this world's desolation every-  
 where  
 One fate—my own!  
 Well, that was foolish! Now  
 I am not so exacting. As we move  
 Further and further down the path  
 of fate  
 To the sure tomb, we yield up, one  
 by one,  
 Our claims on Fortune, till with  
 each new year  
 We seek less and go further to ob-  
 tain it.  
 'Tis the old tale,—aye, all of us  
 must learn it!  
 But yet I would not empty-handed  
 stand  
 Before the House of Hades. Still  
 there's life,  
 And hope with life; and much that  
 may be done.  
 Look up, O thou most dear and  
 cherisht head!  
 We'll strive still, conquering; or, if  
 falling, fall  
 In sight of grand results.

ÆGISTHUS.

May these things be!  
 I know not. All is vague. I should  
 be strong  
 Even were you weak. 'Tis other-  
 wise—I see,  
 No path to safety sure. We have  
 done ill things.  
 Best let the past be past, lest new  
 griefs come.  
 Best we part now.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Part! what, to part from thee!  
 Never till death,—not in death even,  
 part!

ÆGISTHUS

But one course now is left.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

And that is—

ÆGISTHUS.

Flight.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Coward!

ÆGISTHUS.

I care not.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Flight! I am a Queen.  
 A goddess once you said,—and why  
 not goddess?  
 Seeing the Gods are mightier than  
 we  
 By so much more of courage. O,  
 not I,  
 But you, are mad.

ÆGISTHUS.

Nay, wiser than I was.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

And you will leave me?

ÆGISTHUS.

Not if you will come.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

This was the Atlas of the world I  
built!

ÆGISTHUS.

Flight! . . . yes, I know not . . .  
somewhere . . . anywhere.  
You come? . . . you come not?  
well? . . . no time to pause!

CLYTEMNESTRA.

And this is he—this he, the man I  
loved!  
And this is retribution! O my  
heart!  
O Agamemnon, how art thou  
avenged!  
And I have done so much for him!  
. . . would do  
So much! . . . a universe lies  
ruined here.  
Now by Apollo, be a man for once!  
Be for once strong, or be forever  
weak!  
If shame be dead, and honor be no  
more,  
No more true faith, nor that which  
in old time  
Made us like Gods, sublime in our  
high place,  
Yet all surviving instincts warn  
from flight.  
Flight!—O, impossible! Even now  
the steps  
Of fate are at the threshold. Which  
way fly?  
For every avenue is barred by death.  
Will these not scout your flying  
heels? If now  
They hate us powerful, will they  
love us weak?  
No land is safe; nor any neighbor-  
ing king  
Will harbor Agamemnon's enemy.  
Reflect on Troy; her ashes smoul-  
der yet.

ÆGISTHUS.

Her words compel me with their  
awful truth.

For so would vengeance hound and  
earth us down.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

If I am weak to move you by that  
love  
You swore long since—and sealed it  
with false lips!—  
Yet lives there nothing of the ambi-  
tious will?  
Of those proud plots, and dexterous  
policy,  
On which you builded such high  
hopes, and swore  
To rule this people Agamemnon  
rules;  
Supplant him eminent on his own  
throne,  
And push our power through Greece?

ÆGISTHUS.

The dream was great.  
It was a dream. We dreamt it like  
a king.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Ay, and shall so fulfil it—like a  
King!  
Who talks of flight? For now, be-  
think you well,  
If to live on, the byword of a world,  
Be any gain, even such flight offers  
not.  
Will long-armed Vengeance never  
find you out  
When you have left the weapon in  
her hands?  
Be bold, and meet her! Who fore-  
stall the bolts  
Of heaven, the Gods deem worthy  
of the Gods.  
Success is made the measure of our  
acts.  
And, think, Ægisthus, there has  
been one thought  
Before us in the intervals of years,  
Between us ever in the long dark  
nights,  
When, lying all awake, we heard  
the wind.

Do you shrink then? or, only closer  
drawing

Your lips to mine, your arms about  
my neck,

Say, "Who would fear such chances,  
when he saw

Behind them such a prize for him  
as this?"

Do you shrink now? Dare you put  
all this from you?

Revoke the promise of those years,  
and say

This prospect meets you unprepared  
at last?

Our motives are so mixt in their be-  
ginnings

And so confused, we recognize them  
not

Till they are grown to acts; but  
ne'er were ours

So blindly wov'n, but what we both  
untangled

Out of the intricacies of the heart  
One purpose: — being found, best  
grapple to it.

For to conceive ill deeds yet dare  
not do them,

This is not virtue, but a twofold  
shame.

Between the culprit and the demi-  
god

There's but one difference men re-  
gard — success.

The weakly-wicked shall be doubly  
damned!

ÆGISTHUS.

I am not weak . . . what will you?  
. . . O, too weak

To bear this scorn! . . . She is a  
godlike fiend,

And hell and heaven seem meeting  
in her eyes.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

These who on perilous ventures  
once embark

Should burn their ships, nor ever  
dream return.

Better, though all Olympus marched  
on us,

To die like fallen Titans, scorning  
Heaven,  
Than live like slaves in scorn of our  
own selves!

ÆGISTHUS.

We wait then? Good! and dare  
this desperate chance.

And if we fall (as we, I think, must  
fall)

It is but some few sunny hours we  
lose,

Some few bright days. True! and  
a little less

Of life, or else of wroug a little more.  
What's that? For one shade more

or less the night  
Will scarce seem darker or lighter,

— the long night!  
We'll fall together, if we fall; and

if —  
O, if we live! —

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Ay, that was noblier thought.  
Now you grow back into yourself,  
your true self.

My King! my chosen! my glad care-  
less helpmate

In the old time! we shared its  
pleasant days

Royally, did we not? How brief  
they were!

Nor will I deem you less than what  
I know

You have it in you to become, for  
this

Strange freakish fear,—this passing  
brief alarm.

Do I not know the noble steed will  
start

Aside, scared lightly by a straw, or  
shadow,

A thorn-bush in the way, while the  
dull mule

Plods stupidly adown the dizziest  
paths?

And oft indeed, such trifles will dis-  
may

The finest and most eager spirits,  
which yet

Daunt not a duller mind. O love,  
 be sure  
 Whate'er betide, whether for well  
 or ill,  
 Thy fate and mine are bound up in  
 one skein;  
 Clotho must cut them both insepa-  
 rate.  
 You dare not leave me — had you  
 wings for flight!  
 You shall not leave me! You are  
 mine, indeed,  
 (As I am yours!) by my strong right  
 of grief.  
 Not death together, but together  
 life!  
 Life — life with safe and honorable  
 years,  
 And power to do with these that  
 which we would!  
 —His lips compress—his eye dilates  
 —he is saved!  
 O, when strong natures into frailer  
 ones  
 Have struck deep root, if one exalt  
 not both,  
 Both must drag down and perish!

ÆGISTHUS.

If we should live —

CLYTEMNESTRA.

And we shall live.

ÆGISTHUS.

Yet . . . yet—

CLYTEMNESTRA.

What! shrinking still?  
 I'll do the deed. Do not stand off  
 from me.

ÆGISTHUS.

Terrible Spirit!

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Nay, not terrible,  
 Not to thee terrible — O say not so!  
 To thee I never have been anything

But a weak, passionate, unhappy  
 woman,  
 (O woe is me!) and now you fear  
 me—

ÆGISTHUS.

No,

But rather worship.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

O my heart, my heart,  
 It sends up all its anguish in this  
 cry—

Love me a little?

ÆGISTHUS.

What a spell she has  
 To sway the inmost courses of the  
 soul!

My spirit is held up to such a height  
 I dare not breathe. How finely sits  
 this sorrow

Upon her, like the garment of a  
 God!

I cannot fathom her. Does the  
 same birth

Bring forth the monster and the  
 demigod?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

I will not doubt! All's lost, if love  
 be lost,—

Peace, honor, innocence, — gone,  
 gone! all gone

And you, too—you, poor baffled  
 crownless schemer,

Whose life my love makes royal,  
 clothes in purple,

Establishes in state, without me,  
 answer me,

What should you do but perish, as  
 is fit?

O love, you dare not cease to love  
 me now!

We have let the world go by us,  
 We have trusted

To ourselves only: if we fail our-  
 selves

What shall avail us now? Without  
 my love

What rest for you but universal  
 hate,

And Agamemnon's sword? Ah, no  
— you love me,  
Must love me, better than you ever  
loved, —  
Love me, I think, as you love life  
itself!

Ægisthus! Speak, Ægisthus!

ÆGISTHUS.

O great heart,  
I am all yours. Do with me what  
you will.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

O, if you love me, I have strength  
for both.  
And you do love me still?

ÆGISTHUS.

O more, thrice more,  
Thrice more then wert thou Aphro-  
ditë's self  
Stept zoned and sandalled from the  
Olympian Feasts  
Or first revealed among the pink  
sea-foam.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Whate'er I am, be sure that I am  
that  
Which thou hast made me, — noth-  
ing of myself.  
Once, all unheeded, careless of my-  
self,  
And wholly ignorant of what I was,  
I grew up as a reed some wind will  
touch,  
And wake to prophecy, — till then all  
mute,  
And void of melody, — a foolish  
weed!  
My soul was blind, and all my life  
was dark,  
And all my heart pined with some  
ignorant want.  
I moved about, a shadow in the  
house,  
And felt unwedded though I was a  
wife;  
And all the men and women which  
I saw

Were but as pictures painted on a  
wall:

To me they had not either heart, or  
brain,

Or lips, or language, — pictures!  
nothing more.

Then, suddenly, athwart those  
lonely hours

Which, day by day dreamed listlessly  
away,

Led to the dark and melancholy  
tomb,

Thy presence passed and touched  
me with a soul.

My life did but begin when I found  
thee.

O what a strength was hidden in  
this heart!

As, all unvalued, in its cold dark  
cave

Under snow hills, some rare and  
priceless gem

May sparkle and burn, so in this  
life of mine

Love lay shut up. You broke the  
rock away,

You lit upon the jewel that it hid,  
You plucked it forth, — to wear it,  
my Beloved!

To set in the crown of thy dear life!  
To embellish fortune! Cast it not  
away.

Now call me by the old familiar  
names:

Call me again your Queen, as once  
you used;

You large-eyed Herë!

ÆGISTHUS.

O, you are a Queen  
That should have none but Gods to  
rule over!

Make me immortal with one costly  
kiss!

VIII. CHORUS. ELECTRA. CLY-  
TEMNESTRA. ÆGISTHUS.

CHORUS.

Io! Io! I hear the people shout.

ELECTRA.

See how these two do mutually  
confer,  
Hatching new infamy. Now will he  
dare,  
In his unbounded impudence, to  
meet  
My father's eyes? The hour is nigh  
at hand.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

O love, be bold! the hour is nigh  
at hand.

ELECTRA.

Laden with retribution, lingering  
slow.

ÆGISTHUS.

A time in travail with some great  
distress.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Nay, rather safety for the rest of  
time.

O love! O hate!

ELECTRA.

O vengeance!

ÆGISTHUS.

O wild chance

If favoring fate —

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Despair is more than fate.

CHORUS.

Io! Io! The King is on his march.

ÆGISTHUS.

Did you hear that?

ELECTRA.

The hour is nigh at hand!

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Leave me to deal with these. I know  
the arts  
That guide the doubtful purpose of  
discourse

Through many windings to the ap-  
pointed goal.

I'll draw them on to such a frame  
of mind

As best befits our purpose. You,  
meanwhile,

Scatter vague words among the  
other crowd,

Lest the event, when it is due, fall  
foul

Of unpropitious natures.

ÆGISTHUS.

Do you fear

The helpless, blind ill-will of such  
a crowd?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

He only fears mankind who knows  
them not.

But him I praise not who despises  
them.

Whence come, Electra?

ELECTRA.

From my father's hearth

To meet him; for the hour is nigh  
at hand.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

So do our hopes race hotly to one  
end,

(A noble rivalry!) as who shall first  
Embrace this happy fortune. Tarry  
not.

We too will follow.

ELECTRA.

Justice, O be swift!

IX. CLYTEMNESTRA. CHORUS.  
SEMI-CHORUS. HERALD.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

A froward child! She's gone. My  
blood's in her.

Her father's, too, looks out of that  
proud face.

She is too bold . . . ha, well — Ægis-  
thus? . . . gone!

O fate ! to be a woman ! You great  
 Gods,  
 Why did you fashion me in this soft  
 mould ?  
 Give me these lengths of silky hair ?  
 These hands  
 Too delicately dimpled ! and these  
 arms  
 Too white, too weak ! yet leave the  
 man's heart in me,  
 To mar your masterpiece, — that I  
 should perish,  
 Who else had won renown among my  
 peers,  
 A man, with men,—perchance a god  
 with you,  
 Had you but better sexed me, you  
 blind Gods !  
 But, as for man, all things are fitting  
 to him.  
 He strikes his fellow 'mid the clang-  
 ing shields,  
 And leaps among the smoking walls,  
 and takes  
 Some long-haired virgin wailing at  
 the shrines,  
 Her brethren having fallen ; and  
 you Gods  
 Commend him, crown him, grant  
 him ample days,  
 And dying honor, and an endless  
 peace  
 Among the deep Elysian asphodels.  
 O fate, to be a woman ! To be led  
 Dumb, like a poor mule, at a mas-  
 ter's will,  
 And be a slave, though bred in pal-  
 aces,  
 And be a fool, though seated with  
 the wise,—  
 A poor and pitiful fool, as I am  
 now,  
 Loving and hating my vain life  
 away !

## CHORUS.

These flowers—we plucked them  
 At morning, and took them  
 From bright bees that sucked  
 them

And warm winds that shook them  
 'Neath blue hills that o'erlook  
 them.

## SEMI-CHORUS.

With the dewes of the meadow  
 Our rosy warm fingers  
 Sparkle yet, and the shadow  
 Of the summer-cloud lingers  
 In the hair of us singers.

## FIRST SEMI-CHORUS.

Ere these buds on our altars  
 Fade ; ere the fork't fire,  
 Fed with pure honey, falters  
 And fails : louder, higher  
 Raise the Pæan.

## SECOND SEMI-CHORUS.

Draw nigher,  
 Stand closer ! First praise we  
 The Father of all.  
 To him the song raise we.  
 Over Heaven's golden wall  
 Let it fall ! Let it fall !

## FIRST SEMI-CHORUS.

Then Apollo, the king of  
 The lyre and the bow ;  
 Who taught us to sing of  
 The deeds that we know,—  
 Deeds well done long ago.

## SECOND SEMI-CHORUS.

Next, of all the Immortals,  
 Athenë's gray eyes ;  
 Who sits throned in our portals,  
 Ever fair, ever wise.

## FIRST SEMI-CHORUS.

Neither dare we despise  
 To extol the great Herë,

## SECOND SEMI-CHORUS.

And then,  
 As is due, shall our song  
 Be of those among men  
 Who were brave, who were strong,  
 Who endured.

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS.

Then, the wrong  
Of the Phrygian : and Iliion's false  
sons :  
And Scamander's wild wave  
Through the bleak plain that runs.

SECOND SEMI-CHORUS.

Then, the death of the brave.

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS.

Last, of whom the Gods save  
For new honors : of them none  
So good or so great  
As our chief Agamemnon  
The crown of our State.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

O friends, true hearts, rejoice with  
me ! This day  
Shall crown the hope of ten uncer-  
tain years !

CHORUS.

For Agamemnon cannot be far off—

CLYTEMNESTRA.

He comes—and yet—O Heaven pre-  
serve us all !  
My heart is weak—there's One he  
brings not back ;  
Who went with him ; who will not  
come again ;  
Whom we shall never see !—

CHORUS.

O Queen, for whom,  
Lamenting thus, is your great heart  
cast down ?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

The earliest loved—the early lost !  
my child—

CHORUS.

Iphigenia ?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

She—my child—

CHORUS.

—Alas  
That was a terrible necessity !

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Was it necessity ? O pardon, friends,  
But in the dark, unsolaced solitude,  
Wild thoughts come to me, and per-  
plex my heart.  
This, which you call a dread neces-  
sity,  
Was it a murder or a sacrifice ?

CHORUS.

It was a God that did decree the  
death.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

'Tis through the heart the Gods do  
speak to us.  
High instincts are the oracles of  
heaven.  
Did ever heart,—did ever God, be-  
fore,  
Suggest such foul infanticidal lie ?

CHORUS.

Be comforted ! The universal good  
Needed this single, individual loss.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Can all men's good be helped by one  
man's crime ?

CHORUS.

He loosed the Greeks from Aulis by  
that deed.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

O casual argument ! Who gave the  
Greeks  
Such bloody claim upon a virgin's  
life ?  
Shall the pure bleed to purge impu-  
rity ?



A hundred Helens were not worth  
that death!

What! had the manhood of combinéd  
Greece,

Whose boast was in its untamed  
strength, no help

Better than the spilt blood of one  
poor girl?

Or, if it were of need that blood  
should flow,

What God ordained him executioner?

Was it for him the armament was  
planned?

For him that angry Greece was  
leaguéd in war?

For him, or Menelaus, was this  
done?

Was the cause his, or Menelaus'  
cause?

Was he less sire than Menelaus was?  
He, too, had children; did he murder  
them?

O, was it manlike? was it human,  
even?

CHORUS.

Alas! alas! it was an evil thing.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

O friends, if any one among you all,  
If any be a mother, bear with me!

She was my earliest born, my best  
belovéd.

The painful labor of that perilous  
birth

That gave her life did almost take  
my own.

He had no pain. He did not bring  
her forth.

How should he, therefore, love her  
as I lovéd?

CHORUS.

Ai! ai! alas! Our tears run down  
with yours.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

O, who shall say with what delicious  
tears,

With what ineffable tenderness,  
while he

Took his blithe pastime on the  
windy plain,

Among the ringing camps, and  
neighing steeds,

First of his glad compeers, I sat  
apart,

Silent, within the solitary house:  
Rocking the little child upon my  
breast;

And soothed its soft eyes into sleep  
with song!

CHORUS.

Ai! ai! unhappy, sad, unchildéd  
one!

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Or, when I taught, from inarticulate  
sounds,

The little, lisping lips, to breathe  
his name.

Now they will never breathe that  
name again!

CHORUS.

Alas! for Hades has not any hope,  
Since Thracian women lopped the  
tuneful head

Of Orpheus, and Heracleus is no  
more.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Or, spread in prayer, the helpless,  
infant hands,

That they, too, might invoke the  
Gods for him.

Alas, who now invokes the Gods  
for her?

Unweddéd, hapless, gone to glut the  
womb

Of dark, untimely Orcus!

CHORUS.

Ai! alas!

CLYTEMNESTRA.

I would have died, if that could be,  
for her!

When life is half-way set to feeble  
eld,

And memory more than hope, and  
 to dim eyes  
 The gorgeous tapestry of existence  
 shows  
 Mothed, fingered, frayed, and bare,  
 'twere not so hard  
 To fling away this ravelled skein of  
 life,  
 Which else, a little later, Fate had  
 cut.  
 And who would sorrow for the o'er-  
 blown rose  
 Sharp winter strews about its own  
 bleak thorns?  
 But, cropped before the time, to fall  
 so young!  
 And wither in the gloomy crown of  
 Dis!  
 Never to look upon the blessed sun—

## CHORUS.

Ai! ai! alinon! woe is me, this  
 grief  
 Strikes pity paralyzed. All words  
 are weak!

## CLYTEMNESTRA.

And I had dreamed such splendid  
 dreams for her!  
 Who would not so for Agamemnon's  
 child?  
 For we had hoped that she, too, in  
 her time  
 Would be the mother of heroic  
 men!

## CHORUS.

There rises in my heart an awful  
 fear,  
 Lest from these evils darker evils  
 come;  
 For heaven exacts, for wrong, the  
 uttermost tear,  
 And death hath language after life  
 is dumb!

## CLYTEMNESTRA.

It works! it works!

## CHORUS.

Look, some one comes this way.

## HERALD.

O Honor of the House of Tantalus!  
 The king's wheels echo in the  
 brazen gates.

## CLYTEMNESTRA.

Our heart is half-way there, to wel-  
 come him.  
 How looks he? Well? And all our  
 long-lost friends —  
 Their faces grow before me. Lead  
 the way  
 Where we may meet them. All our  
 haste seems slow.

## CHORUS.

Would that he brought his dead  
 child back with him!

## CLYTEMNESTRA.

Now let him come. The mischief  
 works apace!

## X. CHORUS.

## CHORUS.

The winds were lulled in Aulis; and  
 the day,  
 Down-sloped, was loitering to the  
 lazy west.  
 There was no motion of the glassy  
 bay,  
 But all things by a heavy light op-  
 prest.  
 Windless, cut off from the destined  
 way, —  
 Dark shrouds, distinct against the  
 lurid lull, —  
 Dark ropes hung useless, loose,  
 from mast to hull, —  
 The black ships lay abreast.  
 Not any cloud would cross the  
 brooding skies.  
 The distant sea boomed faintly.  
 Nothing more.  
 They walked about upon the yellow  
 shore;

Or, lying listless, huddled groups  
     supine,  
 With faces turned toward the flat  
     sea-spine,  
 They planned the Phrygian battle  
     o'er and o'er;  
 Till each grew sullen, and would  
     talk no more,  
 But sat, dumb-dreaming. Then  
     would some one rise,  
 And look toward the hollow hulls,  
     with haggard, hopeless eyes —  
 Wild eyes — and, crowding round,  
     yet wilder eyes —  
 And gaping, languid lips;  
 And everywhere that men could see,  
 About the black, black ships,  
 Was nothing but the deep-red sea;  
 The deep-red shore;  
 The deep-red skies;  
 The deep-red silence, thick with  
     thirsty sighs;  
 And daylight, dying slowly. Noth-  
     ing more.  
 The tall masts stood upright;  
 And not a sail above the burnished  
     prores;  
 The languid sea, like one outwear-  
     ied quite,                   [shores,  
 Shrank, dying inward into hollow  
 And breathless harbors, under  
     sandy bars;  
 And, one by one, down tracts of  
     quivering blue,  
 The singed and sultry stars  
 Looked from the inmost heaven,  
     far, faint, and few,  
 While, all below, the sick and  
     steaming brine  
 The spilled-out sunset did incarna-  
     dine.  
  
 At last one broke the silence; and  
     a word  
 Was lisped and buzzed about, from  
     mouth to mouth;  
 Pale faces grew more pale; wild  
     whispers stirred;  
 And men, with moody, murmuring  
     lips, conferred

In ominous tones, from shaggy  
     beards uncouth:  
 As though some wind had broken  
     from the blurred  
 And blazing prison of the stagnant  
     drouth,  
 And stirred the salt sea in the stifled  
     south.  
 The long-robed priests stood round;  
     and, in the gloom,  
 Under black brows, their bright and  
     greedy eyes,  
 Shone deathfully; there was a sound  
     of sighs,  
 Thick-sobbed from choking throats  
     among the crowd,  
 That, whispering, gathered close,  
     with dark heads bowed;  
 But no man lifted up his voice  
     aloud,  
 For heavy hung o'er all the helpless  
     sense of doom.  
  
 Then, after solemn prayer,  
 The father bade the attendants, ten-  
     derly  
 Lift her upon the lurid altar-stone.  
 There was no hope in any face;  
     each eye                   [upon.  
 Swam tearful, that her own did gaze  
 They bound her helpless hands with  
     mournful care;  
 And looped up her long hair,  
 That hung about her, like an amber  
     shower,  
 Mixed with the saffron robe, and  
     falling lower,  
 Down from her bare and cold white  
     shoulder flung.  
 Upon the heaving breast the pale  
     cheek hung,  
 Suffused with that wild light that  
     rolled among  
 The pausing crowd, out of the crim-  
     son drouth.  
 They held hot hands upon her plead-  
     ing mouth;                   [cry.  
 And stifled on faint lips the natural  
 Back from the altar-stone,  
 Slow-moving in his fixed place

A little space,  
 The speechless father turned. No  
     word was said,  
 He wrapped his mantle close about  
     his face,  
 In his dumb grief, without a moan.  
 The loppingaxe was lifted overhead.  
 Then, suddenly,  
 There sounded a strange motion of  
     the sea,  
 Booming far inland; and above the  
     east  
 A ragged cloud rose slowly, and in-  
     creased.  
 Not one line in the horoscope of  
     Time                      [this,  
 Is perfect. O, what falling off is  
 When some grand soul, that else  
     had been sublime,  
 Falls unawares amiss,  
 And stoops its crested strength to  
     sudden crime!

So gracious a thing is it, and sweet,  
 In life's clear centre one true man  
     to see,

That holds strong nature in a wise  
     control;

Throbbing out, all round, the heat  
 Of a large and liberal soul.

No shadow, simulating life,  
 But pulses warm with human nature,

In a soul of godlike stature;  
 Heart and brain, all rich and rife

With noble instincts; strong to meet  
 Time calmly, in his purposed place.

Sound through and through, and all  
     complete;

Exalting what is low and base;  
 Enlarging what is narrow and small;

He stamps his character on all,  
 And with his grand identity

Fills up Creation's eye.  
 He will not dream the aimless years

    away  
 In blank delay,

But makes eternity of to-day,  
 And reaps the full-cared time. For

    him  
 Nature her affluent horn doth brim,

To strew with fruit and flowers his  
     way —

Fruits ripe and flowers gay.

The clear soul in his earnest eyes  
 Looks through and through all

    plaited lies,  
 Time shall not rob him of his youth,  
 Nor narrow his large sympathies.

He is not true, he is a truth,  
 And such a truth as never dies.

Who knows his nature, feels his  
     right,

And, toiling, toils for his delight;  
 Not as slaves toil: where'er he goes,

The desert blossoms with the rose.  
 He trusts himself in scorn of doubt,

And lets orb'd purpose widen out.  
 The world works with him; all men

    see  
 Some part of them fulfilled in him;  
 His memory never shall grow dim;

He holds the heaven and earth in  
     fee,

Not following that, fulfilling this,  
 He is immortal, for he is!

O weep! weep! weep!  
 Weep for the young that die;

As it were pale flowers that wither  
     under

The smiting sun, and fall asunder,  
 Before the dew on the grass are dry,

Or the tender twilight is out of the  
     sky,

Or the lilies have fallen asleep;  
 Or ships by a wanton wind cut short

Are wrecked in sight of the placid  
     port

Sinking strangely, and suddenly —  
 Sadly, and strangely, and suddenly —

Into the black Plutonian deep.  
 O weep! weep! weep!

Weep, and bow the head,  
 For those whose sun is set at noon;

Whose night is dark, without a moon;  
 Whose aim of life is sped

Beyond pursuing woes,  
 And the arrow of angry foes,

To the darkness that no man knows —  
 The darkness among the dead.

Let us mourn, and bow the head,  
 And lift up the voice, and weep  
 For the early dead !  
 For the early dead we may bow the  
 head,  
 And strike the breast, and weep ;  
 But, O, what shall be said  
 For the living sorrow ?  
 For the living sorrow our grief—  
 Dumb grief—draws no relief  
 From tears, nor yet may borrow  
 Solace from sound or speech ;—  
 For the living sorrow  
 That heaps to-morrow upon to-mor-  
 row  
 In piled-up pain, beyond Hope's  
 reach !  
 It is well that we mourn for the early  
 dead,  
 Strike the breast, and bow the head ;  
 For the sorrow for these may be sung,  
 or said,  
 And the chaplets be woven for the  
 fallen head,  
 And the urns to the stately tombs be  
 led,  
 And Love from their memory may  
 be fed,  
 And song may ennoble the anguish ;  
 But, O, for the living sorrow,—  
 For the living sorrow what hopes re-  
 main ?  
 For the prisoned, pining, passionate  
 pain,  
 That is doomed forever to languish,  
 And to languish forever in vain,  
 For the want of the words that may  
 bestead  
 The hunger that out of loss is bred.  
 O friends, for the living sorrow—  
 For the living sorrow—  
 For the living sorrow what shall be  
 said ?

**XI. A PHOCIAN. CHORUS.  
 SEMI-CHORUS.**

PHOCIAN.

O noble strangers, if indeed you be  
 Such as you seem, of Argos, and the  
 land

That the unconquer'd Agamemnon  
 rules,  
 Tell me is this the palace, these the  
 roofs  
 Of the Atridæ, famed in ancient  
 song ?

CHORUS.

Not without truth you name the  
 neighborhood,  
 Standing before the threshold, and  
 the doors  
 Of Pelops, and upon the Argive soil.  
 That which you see above the Agora  
 Is the old fane of the Lycæan God,  
 And this the house of Agamemnon's  
 queen.  
 But whence art thou ? For if thy  
 dusty locks,  
 And those soiled sandals show with  
 aught of truth,  
 Thou shouldst be come from far.

PHOCIAN.

And am so, friends.  
 But, by Heaven's favor, here my  
 journey ends.

CHORUS.

Whence, then, thy way ?

PHOCIAN.

From Phocis ; charged with gifts  
 For Agamemnon, and with messages  
 From Strophius, and the sister of  
 your king.  
 Our watchmen saw the beacon on  
 the hills,  
 And leaped for joy. Say, is the king  
 yet come ?

CHORUS.

He comes this way ; stand by, I hear  
 them shout ;  
 Here shall you meet him, as he  
 mounts the hill.

PHOCIAN.

Now blest be all the Gods, from  
 Father Zeus,

Who reigns o'er windy Cæta, far  
away,  
To King Apollo, with the golden  
horns.

## CHORUS.

Look how they cling about him !  
Far and near  
The town breaks loose, and follows  
after,

Crowding up the ringing ways.  
The boy forgets to watch the steer ;  
The grazing steer forgets to graze ;  
The shepherd leaves the herd ;  
The priest will leave the fane ;  
The deep heart of the land is stirred  
To sunny tears, and tearful laughter,  
To look into his face again.  
Burst, burst the brazen gates !  
Throw open the hearths, and follow !  
Let the shouts of the youths go up  
to Apollo,

Lord of the graceful quiver :  
Till the tingling sky dilates—  
Dilates, and palpitates ;  
And, Pæan Pæan ! the virgins  
sing ;

Pæan ! Pæan ! the king ! the king !  
Laden with spoils from Phrygia !  
Io ! Io ! Io ! they sing  
Till the pillars of Olympus ring :  
Io ! to Queen Ortygia,  
Whose double torch shall burn for-  
ever ?

But thou, O Lord of the graceful  
quiver,

Bid, bid thy Pythian splendor halt,  
Where'er he beams, surpassing sight ;  
Or on some ocean isthmus bent,  
Or wheeled from the dark continent,  
Half-way down Heaven's rosy vault,  
Toward the dewy cone of night.  
Let not the breathless air grow dim,  
Until the whole land look at him !

## SEMI-CHORUS.

Stand back !

## SEMI-CHORUS.

Will he come this way ?

## SEMI-CHORUS.

No ; by us

## SEMI-CHORUS.

Gods, what a crowd !

## SEMI-CHORUS.

How firm the old men walk

## SEMI-CHORUS.

There goes the king. I know him  
by his beard.

## SEMI-CHORUS.

And I, too, by the manner of his  
gait.

That Godlike spirit lifts him from  
the earth.

## SEMI-CHORUS.

How gray he looks !

## SEMI-CHORUS.

His cheek is seamed with scars.

## SEMI-CHORUS.

What a bull's front !

## SEMI-CHORUS.

He stands up like a tower.

## SEMI-CHORUS.

Ay, like some moving tower of  
arméd men,  
That carries conquest under city-  
walls.

## SEMI-CHORUS.

He lifts his sublime head, and in his  
port  
Bears eminent authority.

## SEMI-CHORUS.

Behold,  
His spear shows like the spindle of a  
Fate !

SEMI-CHORUS.

O, what an arm !

SEMI-CHORUS.

Most fit for such a sword ;  
Look at that sword.

SEMI-CHORUS.

What shoulders !

SEMI-CHORUS.

What a throat !

SEMI-CHORUS.

What are these bearing ?

SEMI-CHORUS.

Urns.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Alas ! alas !

SEMI-CHORUS.

O friends, look here ! how are the  
mighty men  
Shrunk into a little vase of earth,  
A child might lift. Sheathed each  
in brazen plates,  
They went so heavy, they come  
back so light,  
Sheathed, each one, in the brazen  
urn of death !

SEMI-CHORUS.

With what a stateliness he moves  
along !

SEMI-CHORUS.

See, how they touch his skirt, and  
grasp his hand !

SEMI-CHORUS.

Is that the queen ?

SEMI-CHORUS.

Ay, how she matches him !  
With what grand eyes she looks up,  
full in his !

SEMI-CHORUS.

Say, what are these !

SEMI-CHORUS.

O Phrygians ! how they walk !  
The only sad man in the crowd, I  
think.

SEMI-CHORUS.

But who is this, that with such  
scornful brows,  
And looks averted, walks among the  
rest ?

SEMI-CHORUS.

I know not, but some Phrygian wo-  
man, sure.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Her heavy-fallen hair down her  
white neck  
(A dying sunbeam tangled in each  
tress)  
All its neglected beauty pours one  
way.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Her looks bend ever on the alien  
ground,  
As though the stones of Troy were  
in her path.  
And in the pained paleness of her  
brow  
Sorrow hath made a regal tenement.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Here comes Electra ; young Orestes,  
too ;  
See how he emulates his father's  
stride !

## SEMI-CHORUS.

Look at Ægisthus, where he walks  
apart,  
And bites his lip.

## SEMI-CHORUS.

I oft have seen him so  
When something chafes him in his  
bitter moods.

## SEMI-CHORUS.

Peace, here they come !

## CHORUS.

Io ! Io ! The King !

XII. AGAMEMNON, CLYTEMNESTRA, ÆGISTHUS, ELEC-  
TRA, ORESTES, CASSANDRA,  
*a Phocian, Chorus, Semi-Chorus,  
and others in the procession.*

## CLYTEMNESTRA.

O blazing sun, that in thy skyey  
tower,  
Pauseth to see one kingly as thy-  
self,  
Lend all thy brightest beams to light  
his head,  
And guide our gladness ! Friends,  
behold the King !  
Nor hath Ætolian Jove, the arbiter  
Of conquests, well disposed the issues  
here ;  
For every night that brought not  
news from Troy  
Heaped fear on fear, as waves suc-  
ceed to waves,  
When Northern blasts blow white  
the Cretan main,—  
Knowing that thou, far off, from  
toil to toil  
Climbest, uncertain. Unto such an  
one  
His children, and young offspring  
of the house

Are as a field, which he, the hus-  
bandman.

Owing far off does only look upon  
At seedtime once, nor then till  
harvest comes ;

And his sad wife must wet with  
nightly tears

Unsolaced pillows, fearing for his  
fate.

To these how welcome, then, his glad  
return,

When he, as thou, comes heavy with  
the weight

Of great achievements, and the spoils  
of time.

## AGAMEMNON.

Enough ! enough ! we weigh you at  
full worth,

And hold you dear, whose gladness  
equals yours ;

But women ever err by over-talk.

Silence to women, as the beard to  
men,

Brings honor ; and plain truth is  
hurt, not helped

By many words. To each his  
separate sphere

The Gods allot. To me the sound-  
ing camp,

Steeds, and the oaken spear ; to you  
the hearth,

Children, and household duties of  
the loom.

'Tis man's to win an honorable  
name ;

Woman's to keep it honorable still.

## CLYTEMNESTRA.

(O beast ! O weakness of this wo-  
manhood !

To let these pompous male thing  
strut in our eyes,

And in their lordship lap themselves  
secure,

Because the lots in life are fallen to  
them.

Am I less heart and head, less blood  
and brain,

Less force and feeling, pulse and  
passion—I—



Than this self-worshipper—a lie all through ?)

Forgive if joy too long unloose our lips,

Silent so long : your words fall on my soul

As rain on thirsty lands, that feeds the dearth

With blessed nourishment. My whole heart hears.

You speaking thus, I would be silent ever.

AGAMEMNON.

Who is this man ?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

A Phocian, by his look.

PHOCIAN.

O King, from Strophius, and your sister's court,

Despatched with this sealed tablet, and with gifts,

Though both express, so says my royal Head,

But poorly the rich welcome they intend.

Will you see this ?—and these ?

AGAMEMNON.

Anon ! anon !

We'll look at them within. O child, thine eyes

Look warmer welcome than all words express.

Thou art mine own child by that royal brow.

Nature hath marked thee mine.

ELECTRA.

O Father !

AGAMEMNON.

Come !

And our Orestes ! He is nobly grown ;

He shall do great deeds when our own are dim.

So shall men come to say "the father's sword

In the son's hands hath hewn out nobler fame."

Think of it, little one ! where is our cousin ?

ÆGISTHUS.

Here ! And the keys of the Acropolis ?

AGAMEMNON.

O well ! this dust and heat are over-much.

And, cousin, you look pale. Anon ! anon !

Speak to us by and by. Let business wait.

Is our house ordered ? we will take the bath.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Will you within ? where all is ordered fair

Befitting state : cool chambers, marble-floored

Or piled with blazing carpets, scented rare

With the sweet spirit of each odorous gum

In dim, delicious, amorous mists about

The purple-paven, silver-sided bath, Deep, flashing, pure.

AGAMEMNON.

Look to our captives then.

I charge you chiefly with this woman here,

Cassandra, the mad prophetess of Troy.

See that you chafe her not in her wild moods.

XIII. CLYTEMNESTRA. ÆGISTHUS.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Linger not !

ÆGISTHUS.

What ? you will to-day—

CLYTEMNESTRA.

—This hour.

ÆGISTHUS.

O, if some chance mar all !

CLYTEMNESTRA.

We'll make chance sure.  
Doubt is the doomsman of self-judged  
disgrace :  
But every chance brings safety to  
self-help.

ÆGISTHUS.

Ay, but the means—the time—

CLYTEMNESTRA.

—Fulfil themselves.

O most irresolute heart ! is this a  
time  
When through the awful pause of  
life, distinct,  
The sounding shears of Fate slope  
near, to stand  
Meek, like tame wethers, and be  
shorn ? How say you,  
The blithe wind up, and the broad  
sea before him,  
Who would crouch all day long be-  
side the mast  
Counting the surges beat his idle  
helm,  
Because between him and the golden  
isles  
The shadow of a passing storm might  
hang ?  
Danger, being pregnant, doth beget  
resolve.

ÆGISTHUS.

Thou wert not born to fail. Give  
me thy hand.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Take it.

ÆGISTHUS.

It does not tremble.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

O be strong !

The future hangs upon the die we  
cast :

Fortune plays high for us—

ÆGISTHUS.

Gods grant she win.

XIV. CHORUS. SEMI-CHORUS  
CASSANDRA.

CHORUS.

O thou that dost with globéd glory  
Sweep the dark world at noon of  
night,  
Or among snowy summits, wild and  
hoary,  
Or through the mighty silences  
Of immemorial seas,  
With all the stars behind thee flying  
white,  
O take with thee, where'er  
Thou wanderest, ancient Care,  
And hide her in some interlunar  
haunt ;  
Where but the wild bird's chaunt  
At night, through rocky ridges gaunt,  
Or moanings of some homeless sea  
may find her  
There, Goddess, bar, and bind her ;  
Where she may pine, but wander not ;  
Loathe her haunts, but leave them  
not ;  
Wail and rave to the wind and wave  
That hear, yet understand her not ;  
And curse her chains, yet cleave  
them not ;  
And hate her lot, yet help it not.  
Or let her rove with Gods undone  
Who dwell below the setting sun,  
And the sad western hours  
That burn in fiery bowers ;  
Or in Amphitrité's grot  
Where the vexéd tides unite,  
And the spent wind, howling, breaks  
O'er sullen oceans out of sight  
Among sea-snakes, that the white  
moon wakes

Till they shake themselves into  
diamond flakes,  
Coil and twine in the glittering brine  
And swing themselves in the long  
moonshine;

Or by wild shores hoarsely rage,  
And moan, and vent her spite,  
In some inhospitable harborage  
Of Thracian waters, white.  
There let her grieve, and grieve, and  
hold her breath

Until she hate herself to death.  
I seem with rapture lifted higher,  
Like one in mystic trance.

O Pan! Pan! Pan!  
First friend of man,  
And founder of Heaven's choir,  
Come thou from old Cyllenë, and  
inspire

The Gnossian, and Nysæan dance!  
Come thou, too, Delian king,  
From the blue Ægean sea,  
And Mycone's yellow coast:

Give my spirit such a wing  
As there the foolish Icarus lost,  
That she may soar above the cope  
Of this high pinnacle of gladness,  
And dizzy height of hope;  
And there, beyond all reach of sad-  
ness,

May tune my lips to sing  
Great Pæans, full and free,  
Till the whole world ring  
With such heart-melting madness  
As bards are taught by thee!

SEMI-CHORUS.

Look to the sad Cassandra, how she  
stands!

SEMI-CHORUS.

She turns not from the wringing of  
her hands.

SEMI-CHORUS.

What is she doing?

SEMI-CHORUS.

Look, her lips are moved.

SEMI-CHORUS.

And yet their motion shapes not  
any sound.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Speak to her.

SEMI-CHORUS.

She will heed not.

SEMI-CHORUS.

But yet speak.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Unhappy woman, cease a little while  
From mourning. Recognize the  
work of Heaven.

Troy smoulders. Think not of it.  
Let the past

Be buried in the past. Tears mend  
it not.

Fate may be kindlier yet than she  
appears.

SEMI-CHORUS.

She does not answer.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Call to her again.

SEMI-CHORUS.

O break this scornful silence! Hear  
us speak.

We would console you.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Look, how she is moved!

SEMI-CHORUS.

O speak! the heart's hurt oft is,  
helped by words.

CASSANDRA.

O Itys! Itys! Itys!

SEMI-CHORUS.

What a shriek!

She takes the language of the night  
ingale,

Unhappy bird! that mourns her  
perished form,  
And leans her breast against a thorn,  
all night.

CASSANDRA.

The bull is in the shambles.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Listen, friends!  
She mutters something to herself.

CASSANDRA.

Alas!  
Did any name Apollo? woe is me!

SEMI-CHORUS.

She calls upon the God.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Unhappy one,  
What sorrow strikes thee with be-  
wildermment?

SEMI-CHORUS.

Now she is mute again.

CHORUS.

A Stygian cold  
Creeps through my limbs, and  
loosens every joint.

The hot blood freezes in its arteries,  
And stagnates round the region of  
the heart.

A cloud comes up from sooty Ache-  
ron,

And clothes mine eyelids  
With infernal night.

My hair stands up.

What supernatural awe  
Shoots, shrivelling through me,

To the marrow and bone?  
O dread and wise Prophetic Powers,

Whose strong-compelling law

Doth hold in awe

The laboring hours,

Your intervention I invoke,

My soul from this wild doubt to  
save;

Whether you have  
Your dwelling in some dark, oracu-  
lar cave,

Or solemn, sacred oak;

Or in Dodona's ancient, honored  
beech,

Whose mystic boughs above

Sat the wise dove;

Or if the tuneful voice of old

Awake in Delos, to unfold  
Dark wisdom in ambiguous speech.

Upon the verge of strange despair  
My heart grows dizzy. Now I seem

Like one that dreams some ghastly  
dream,

And cannot cast away his care,

But harrows all the haggard air

With his hard breath. Above, be-  
neath,

The empty silence seems to teem

With apprehension. O declare

What hidden thing doth Fate pre-  
pare,

What hidden, horrible thing doth  
Fate prepare?

For of some hidden grief my heart  
seems half aware.



XV. CLYTEMNESTRA. CASSAN-  
DRA. CHORUS.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

One blow makes all sure. Ay, but  
then,—beyond?

I cannot trammel up the future  
thus,

And so forecast the time, as with  
one blow

To break the hundred Hydra-heads  
of Chance.

Beyond—beyond I dare not look,  
for who,

If first he scanned the space, would  
leap the gulf?

One blow secures the moment. O,  
but he . . .

Ay, there it lies! I dread lest my  
 love, being  
 So much the stronger, scare his  
 own to death;  
 As what they comprehended not,  
 men abhor.  
 He has a wavering nature, easily  
 Unpoised; and trembling ever on  
 extremes.  
 O, what if terror outweigh love,  
 and love,  
 Having defiled his countenance, take  
 part  
 Against himself, self-loathed, a  
 fallen God?  
 Ah, his was never yet the loving  
 soul,  
 But rather that which lets itself be  
 loved;  
 As some loose lily leans upon a  
 lake, [will,  
 Letting the lymph reflect it, as it  
 Still idly swayed, whichever way  
 the stream  
 Stirs the green tangles of the water  
 moss.  
 The flower of his love never bloomed  
 upright,  
 But a sweet parasite, that loved to  
 lean  
 On stronger natures, winning  
 strength from them,—  
 Not such a flower as whose delirious  
 cup  
 Maddens the bee, and never can  
 give forth  
 Enough of fragrance, yet is ever  
 sweet.  
 Yet which is sweetest, — to receive  
 or give?  
 Sweet to receive, and sweet to give,  
 in love!  
 When one is never sated that re-  
 ceives,  
 Nor ever all exhausted one that  
 gives.  
 I think I love him more, that I re-  
 semble  
 So little aught that pleases me in  
 him.

Perchance, if I dared question this  
 dark heart,  
 'Tis not for him, but for myself in  
 him,  
 For that which is my softer self in  
 him,—  
 I have done this, and this,—and  
 shall do more:  
 Hoped, wept, dared wildly, and will  
 overcome!  
 Does he not need me? It is sweet  
 to think  
 That I am all to him, whate'er I be  
 To others; and to one, — little, I  
 know!  
 But to him, all things, — sceptre,  
 sword, and crown.  
 For who would live, but to be loved  
 by some one?  
 Be fair, but to give beauty to an-  
 other?  
 Or wise, but to instruct some sweet  
 desire?  
 Or strong, but that thereby love  
 may rejoice!  
 Or who for crime's sake would be  
 criminal?  
 And yet for love's sake would not  
 dare wild deeds?  
 A mutual necessity, one fear,  
 One hope, and the strange posture  
 of the time  
 Unite us now; — but this need over-  
 past,  
 O, if, 'twixt his embrace and mine,  
 there rise  
 The reflex of a murdered head! and  
 he, [not  
 Remembering the crime, remember  
 It was for him that I am criminal,  
 But rather hate me for the part he  
 took —  
 Against his soul, as he will say —  
 in this? —  
 I will not think it. Upon this wild  
 venture,  
 Freight with love's last wealthiest  
 merchandise,  
 My heart sets forth. To-morrow I  
 shall wake

A beggar, as it may be, or thrice rich.

As one who plucks his last gem from his crown

(Some pearl for which, in youth, he bartered states)

And, sacrificing with an anxious heart,

Toward night puts seaward in a little bark

For lands reported far beyond the Trusting to win back kingdoms, or there drown —

So I — and with like perilous endeavor!

O, but I think I could implore the Gods

More fervently than ever, in my youth,

I prayed that help of Heaven I needed not,

And lifted innocent hands to their great sky.

So much to lose . . . so much to gain . . . so much . . .

I dare not think how . . .

Ha, the Phrygian slave!

He dares to bring his mistress to the hearth!

She looks unhappy. I will speak to her.

Perchance her hatred may approve my own,

And help me in the work I am about.

'Twere well to sound her.

Be not so cast down,

Unhappy stranger! Fear no jealous hand.

In sorrow I, too, am not all untried. Our fortunes are not so dissimilar,

Slaves both — and of one master. Nay, approach.

Is my voice harsh in its appeal to thee?

If so, believe me, it belies my heart. A woman speaks to thee.

What, silent still?

O, look not on me with such sullen eyes,

There is no accusation in my own. Rather on him that brought thee, than on thee,

Our scorn is settled. I would help thee. Come!

Mute still?

I know that shame is ever dumb, And ever weak; but here is no reproach.

Listen! Thy fate is given to thy hands.

Art thou a woman, and dost scorn contempt?

Art thou a captive, and dost loathe these bonds?

Art thou courageous, as men call thy race?

Or, helpless art thou, and wouldst overcome?

If so, — look up! For there is hope for thee.

Give me thy hand —

CASSANDRA.

Pah! there is blood on it!

CLYTEMNESTRA.

What is she raving of?

CASSANDRA.

The place, from old, Is evil.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Ay, there is a sickness, here, That needs the knife.

CASSANDRA.

O, horrible! blood! blood!

CLYTEMNESTRA.

I see you are a Phrygian to the bone!

Coward and slave! be so forevermore!

CASSANDRA.

Apollo! O Apollo! O blood! blood! The whole place swims with it!

The slippery steps

Steam with the fumes! The rank  
air smells of blood!

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Heed her not! for she knows not  
what she says.

This is some falling sickness of the  
soul.

Her fever frights itself.

CASSANDRA.

It reeks! it reeks! it reeks!  
It smokes! it stifles! blood! blood,  
everywhere!

CLYTEMNESTRA.

See, he hath brought this mad  
woman from Troy,

To shame our honor, and insult our  
care.

Look to her, friends, my hands have  
other work!

CHORUS.

Alas! the House of Tantalus is  
doomed!

CLYTEMNESTRA.

The King sleeps—like an infant.  
His huge strength

Holds slumber thrice as close as  
other men.

How well he sleeps! Make gar-  
lands for the Gods.

I go to watch the couch. Cull every  
flower,

And honor all the tutelary fanes  
With sacrifice as ample as our joy,  
Lest some one say we reverence not  
the Gods!

CHORUS.

O dooméd House and race!  
O toilsome, toilsome horsemanship  
Of Pelops; that ill cmen brought  
to us!

For since the drownéd Myrtilus  
Did from his golden chariot slip

To his last sleep, below the deep,  
Nothing of sad calamitous disgrace  
Hath angry Heaven ceased to heap  
On this unhappy House of Tan-  
talus.

Not only upon sacred leaves of old,  
Preserved in many a guarded, mys-  
tic fold,

But sometimes, too, enrolled  
On tablets fair  
Of stone or brass, with quaint and  
curious care,

In characters of gold,  
And many an iron-bound, melan-  
choly book,

The wisdom of the wise is writ;  
And hardly shall a man,

For all he can,  
By painful, slow degrees,

And nightly reveries,  
Of long, laborious thought, grow  
learned in these.

But who, that reads a woman's wily  
look, [in it?

Shall say what evil hides, and lurks  
Or fathom her false wit?

For by a woman fell the man  
Who did Nemæa's pest destroy,  
And the brinded Hydra slew,  
And many other wonders wrought.

By a woman, fated Troy  
Was overset, and fell to naught.

Royal Amphiaras, too,  
All his wisdom could not free  
From his false Eriphyle,  
Whom a golden necklace bought, —  
So has it been, and so shall it be,  
Ever since the world began!

O woman, woman, of what other  
earth

Hath dædal Nature moulded thee?  
Thou art not of our clay compact,

Not of our common clay; —  
But when the painful world in  
labor lay —

Labor long — and agony,  
In her heaving throes distract,  
And vext with angry Heaven's red  
ire,

Nature, kneading snow and fire,  
 In thy mystic being pent  
 Each contrary element.  
 Life and death within thee blent :  
 All despair and all desire :  
 There to mingle and ferment.  
 While, mad midwives, at thy birth,  
 Furies mixt with Sirens bent,  
 Inter-wreathingsnakesandsmiles,—  
 Fairest dreams and falsest guiles.

Such a splendid mischief thou !  
 With thy light of languid eyes ;  
 And thy bosom of pure snow :  
 And thine heart of fire below,  
 Whose red light doth come and go  
 Ever o'er thy changeful cheek  
 When love-whispers tremble weak :  
 The warm lips and pensive sighs,  
 That the breathless spirit bow :  
 And the heavenward life that lies  
 In the still serenities

Of thy snowy, airy brow,—  
 Thine ethereal airy brow.  
 Such a splendid mischief, thou !  
 What are all thy witcheries ?  
 All thine evil beauty ? All  
 Thy soft looks, and subtle smiles ?  
 Tangled tresses ? Mad caresses ?  
 Tenderness ? Tears and kisses ?  
 And the long look, between whites,  
 That the helpless heart beguiles,  
 Tranced in such a subtle thrall ?  
 What are all thy sighs and smiles ?  
 Fairest dreams and falsest guiles !  
 Hoofs to horses, teeth to lions,  
 Horns to bulls, and speed to hares,  
 To the fish to glide through waters,  
 To the bird to glide through airs,  
 Nature gave : to men gave courage,  
 And the use of brazen spears.  
 What was left to give to woman,  
 All her gifts thus given ! Ah,  
 tears,

Smiles, and kisses, whispers,  
 glances,

Only these ; and merely beauty  
 On her archéd brows unfurled.  
 And with these she shatters lances,  
 All unarmed binds arméd Duty.  
 And in triumph drags the world !

XVI. SEMI-CHORUS. CHORUS.  
 CASSANDRA. AGAMEMNON.  
 CLYTEMNESTRA. ÆGIS-  
 THUS.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Break off, break off ! It seems I  
 heard a cry.

CHORUS.

Surely one called within the house.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Stand by.

CHORUS.

The Prophetess is troubled. Look,  
 her eye  
 Rolls fearfully.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Now all is husht once more.

CHORUS.

I hear the feet of some one at the  
 door.

AGAMEMNON (*within*).

Murderess ! oh, oh !

SEMI-CHORUS.

The house is filled with shrieks.

CHORUS.

The sound deceives or that was the  
 King's voice.

SEMI-CHORUS.

The voice of Agamemnon !

AGAMEMNON (*within*).

Ai ! ai ! ai !

CASSANDRA.

The bull is in the toils.

AGAMEMNON (*within*).

I will not die !



ÆGISTHUS (*within*).  
 O Zeus! he will escape.  
 CLYTEMNESTRA (*within*).  
     He has it.  
 AGAMEMNON (*within*).  
     Ai! ai!  
 CHORUS.  
 Some hideous deed is being done  
 within.  
 Burst in the doors!  
 SEMI-CHORUS.  
     I cannot open them.  
 Barred, barred within!  
 CASSANDRA.  
     The axe is at the bull.  
 CHORUS.  
 Call the elders.  
 SEMI-CHORUS.  
 And the People. O Argives! Ar-  
 gives!  
 Alinon! Alinon!  
 CHORUS.  
     You to the Agora.  
 SEMI-CHORUS.  
     To the temples we.  
 CHORUS.  
 Hearken, O maidens!  
 SEMI-CHORUS.  
 This way.  
 CHORUS.  
     That way.  
 SEMI-CHORUS.  
     Quick! quick!  
 CASSANDRA.  
 Seal my sight, O Apollo! O Apollo!

CHORUS  
 To the Agora!  
 SEMI-CHORUS.  
     To the temples!  
 CHORUS.  
     Haste! haste  
 AGAMEMNON (*within*).  
 Stabbed, oh!  
 CHORUS.  
     Too late!  
 CASSANDRA.  
     The bull is bellowing  
 ÆGISTHUS (*within*).  
 Thrust there again.  
 CLYTEMNESTRA (*within*).  
     One blow has done it all  
 ÆGISTHUS (*within*).  
 Is it quite through?  
 CLYTEMNESTRA (*within*).  
     He will not move again.  
 SEMI-CHORUS.  
 O Heaven and Earth! My heart  
 stands still with awe!  
 Where will this murder end?  
 CHORUS.  
     Hold! some one comes!  
 XVII. ELECTRA. ORESTES.  
 CHORUS. A PHOCIAN.  
 ELECTRA (*leading* ORESTES).  
 Save us! Save him — Orestes!  
 CHORUS.  
     What has fallen?

ELECTRA.

An evil thing. O, we are fatherless !

CHORUS.

Ill-starred Electra ! But how fell  
this chance ?

ELECTRA.

Here is no time for words,—scarce  
time for flight.

When from his royal bath the King  
would rise,—

That devilish woman, lying long in  
lurk,

Behind him crept, with stealthy feet  
unheard,

And flung o'er all his limbs a subtle  
web.

Caught in the craft of whose con-  
trived folds,

Stumbling, he fell. Ægisthus seized  
a sword ;

But halted, half irresolute to strike.

My father, like a lion in the toils,

Upheaved his head, and, writhing,  
roared with wrath,

And angry shame at this infernal  
snare.

Almost he rent the blinding nets  
atwain.

But Clytemnestra on him flung her-  
self,

And caught the steel, and smit him  
through the ribs.

He slipped, and reeled. She drove  
the weapon through,

Piercing the heart !

CHORUS.

O woe ! what tale is this ?

ELECTRA.

I, too, with him, had died, but for  
this child,

And that high vengeance which is  
yet to be.

CHORUS.

Alas ! then Agamemnon is no more,  
Who stood, but now, amongst us,

full of life,

Crowned with achieving years ! The  
roof and cope

Of honor, fallen ! Where shall we  
lift our eyes ?

Where set renown ? Where garner  
up our hopes ?

All worth is dying out. The land is  
dark,

And Treason looks abroad in the  
eclipse.

He did not die the death of men that  
live

Such life as he lived, fall'n among  
his peers,

Whom the red battle rolled away,  
while yet

The shout of Gods was ringing  
through and through them ;

But Death that feared to front him  
in full field,

Lurked by the hearth and smote him  
from behind.

A mighty man is gone. A mighty  
grief

Remains. And rumor of undying  
deeds

For song and legend, to the end of  
time !

What tower is strong ?

ELECTRA.

O friends—if friends you be—  
For who shall say where falsehood

festers not,  
Those being falsest, who should

most be true ?  
Where is that Phocian ? Let him

take the boy,  
And bear him with him to his

master's court.  
Else will Ægisthus slay him.

CHORUS.

Orphaned one,  
Fear you not ?

ORESTES.

I am Agamemnon's son.

CHORUS.

Therefore shouldst fear—

ORESTES.

And therefore cannot fear.

PHOCIAN.

I heard a cry. Did any call?

CHORUS.

O, well!

You happen this way in the need of  
time.

ELECTRA.

O loyal stranger, Agamemnon's  
childIs fatherless. This boy appeals to  
you.O save him, save him from his  
father's foes!

PHOCIAN.

Unhappy lady, what wild words are  
these?

ELECTRA.

The house runs blood. Ægisthus,  
like a fiend,Is raging loose, his weapon dripping  
gore.

CHORUS.

The king is dead.

PHOCIAN.

Is dead!

ELECTRA.

Dead.

PHOCIAN.

Do I dream?

ELECTRA.

Such dreams are dreamed in hell —  
such dreams — O no!Is not the earth as solid — heaven  
above —The sun in heaven — and Nature at  
her work —And men at theirs — the same? O,  
no! no dream!We shall not wake — nor he; though  
the Gods sleep!

Unnaturally murdered —

PHOCIAN.

Murdered!

ELECTRA.

Ay.

And the sun blackens not; the  
world is green;The fires of the red west are not put  
out.Is not the cricket singing in the  
grass?And the shy lizard shooting through  
the leaves?I hear the ox low in the labored  
field.Those swallows build, and are as  
garrulousHigh up i' the towers. Yet I speak  
the truth,

By Heaven, I speak the truth —

PHOCIAN.

Yet more, vouchsafe

How died the king?

ELECTRA.

O, there shall be a time  
For words hereafter. While we  
dally here,Fate haunts, and hounds us. Friend,  
receive this boy.Bear him to Strophius. All this  
tragedyRelate as best you may; it beggars  
speech.Tell him a tower of hope is fallen  
this day —

A name in Greece —

PHOCIAN.

— But you —

ELECTRA.

Away! away!

Destruction posts apace, while we  
delay.

PHOCIAN.

Come then!

ELECTRA.

I dare not leave my father's hearth,

For who would then do honor to  
his urn?  
It may be that my womanhood and  
youth  
May help me here. It may be I  
shall fall,  
And mix my own with Agamemnon's  
blood.  
No matter. On Orestes hangs the  
hope  
Of all this House. Him save for  
better days,  
And ripened vengeance.

PHOCIAN.

Noble-hearted one!  
Come then, last offspring of this  
fated race.  
The future calls thee!

ORESTES.

Sister! Sister!

ELECTRA.

Go!

ORESTES.

O Sister!

ELECTRA.

O my brother! . . . One last kiss, —  
One last long kiss, —how I have  
loved thee, boy!  
Was it for this I nourished thy  
young years  
With stately tales, and legends of  
the gods?  
For this? . . . How the past crowds  
upon me! Ah—  
Wilt thou recall, in lonely, lonely  
hours,  
How once we sat together on still  
eyes,  
(Ah me!) and brooded on all serious  
themes  
Of sweet, and high, and beautiful,  
and good,  
That through the ancient years.  
Alcmena's son,  
And how his life went out in fire on  
Ceta;  
Or of that bright-haired wanderer  
after fame,

That brought the great gold-fleece  
across the sea,  
And left a name in Colchis; or we  
spake  
Of the wise Theseus, councils, king-  
doms, thrones,  
And laws in distant lands; or, later  
still,  
Of the great leaguer set round Iliou,  
And what heart-stirring tidings of  
the war  
Bards brought to Hellas. But when  
I would breathe  
Thy father's name, didst thou not  
grasp my hand,  
And glorious deeds shone round us  
like the stars  
That lit the dark world from a great  
way off,  
And died up into heaven, among the  
Gods?

ORESTES.

Sister, O Sister!

ELECTRA.

Ah, too long we linger.  
Away! away!

PHOCIAN.

Come!

CHORUS.

Heaven go with thee!  
To Crissa points the hand of Des-  
tiny.

ELECTRA.

O boy, on thee Fate hangs an awful  
weight  
Of retribution! Let thy father's  
ghost  
Forever whisper in thine ear. Be  
strong.  
About thee, yet unborn, thy mother  
wove  
The mystic web of life in such-like  
form  
That Agamemnon's spirit in thine  
eyes  
Seems living yet. His seal is set on  
thee;

And Pelops' ivory shoulder marks  
thee his.

Thee, child, nor contests on the  
Isthmian plain,  
Nor sacred apple, nor green laurel-  
leaf,

But graver deeds await. Forget not,  
son,

Whose blood, unwashed, defiles thy  
mother's doors!

CHORUS.

O haste! I hear a sound within the  
house.

ELECTRA.

Farewell, then, son of Agamemnon!

PHOCLIAN.

Come!

XVIII. ELECTRA. CHORUS.  
ÆGISTHUS.

ELECTRA.

Gone! gone! Ah saved! . . . O  
fool, thou missest, here!

CHORUS.

Alas, Electra, whither wilt thou go?

ELECTRA.

Touch me not! Come not near me!  
Let me be!

For this day, which I hoped for, is  
not mine.

CHORUS.

See how she gathers round her all  
her robe, [it be  
And sits apart with grief. O, can  
Great Agamemnon is among the  
shades?

ELECTRA.

Would I had grasped his skirt, and  
followed him!

CHORUS.

Alas! there is an eminence of joy,  
Where Fate grows dizzy, being  
mounted there,

And so tilts over on the other side!  
O fallen, O fallen

The tower, which stood so high!

Whose base and girth were strong  
i' the earth,

Whose head was in the sky!  
O fall'n that tower of noble power,  
That filled up every eye!

He stood so sure, that noble tower!  
To make secure, and fill with power,  
From length to length, the land of  
Greece!

In whose strong bulwarks all men  
saw,

Garnered on the lap of law,  
For dearth or danger, spears of war,  
And harvest sheaves of peace!

O fall'n, O fall'n that lofty tower,—  
The loftiest tower in Greece!

His brows he lift above the noon,  
Filled with the day, a noble tower!  
Who took the sunshine and the  
shower,

And flung them back in merry scorn.  
Who now shall stand when tempests  
lower?

He was the first to catch the morn,  
The last to see the moon.

O friends, he was a noble tower!  
O friends, and fall'n so soon!

Ah, well! lament! lament!

His walls are rent, his bulwarks  
bent,

And stooped that crested eminence,  
Which stood so high for our de-  
fence!

For our defence, — to guard, and  
fence

From all alarm of hurt and harm,  
The fulness of a land's content!

O fall'n away, fall'n at midday,  
And set before the sun is down,

The highest height of our renown!  
O overthrown, the ivory throne!

The spoils of war, the golden crown,  
And chiefest honor of the state!

O mourn with me! what tower is  
free

From over-topping destiny?

What strength is strong to fate?

O mourn with me! when shall we  
 see  
 Another such, so good, so great?  
 Another such, to guard the state?

ÆGISTHUS.

He should have stayed to shout  
 through Troy, or bellow  
 With bulls in Ida —

CHORUS.

Look! Ægisthus comes!  
 Like some lean tiger, having dipt in  
 blood  
 His dripping fangs, and hot athirst  
 for more.  
 His lurid eyeball rolls, as though it  
 swam  
 Through sanguine films. He stag-  
 gers, drunk with rage  
 And crazy mischief.

ÆGISTHUS.

Hold! let no one stir!  
 I charge you, all of you, who hear  
 me speak,  
 Where may the boy Orestes lie con-  
 cealed?  
 I hold the life of each in gage for  
 his.  
 If any know where now he hides  
 from us,  
 Let him beware, not rendering true  
 reply!

CHORUS.

The boy is fled —

ELECTRA.

— is saved!

ÆGISTHUS.

Electra here!  
 How mean you? What is this?

ELECTRA.

Enough is left  
 Of Agamemnon's blood to drown  
 you in.

ÆGISTHUS.

You shall not trifle with me, by my  
 beard!  
 There's peril in this pastime.  
 Where's the boy?

ELECTRA.

Half-way to Phocis, Heaven help-  
 ing him.

ÆGISTHUS.

By the black Styx!

ELECTRA.

'Take not the oath of Gods,  
 Who art but half a man, blasphem-  
 ing coward!

ÆGISTHUS.

But you, by Heaven, if this be a  
 sword,  
 Shall not be any more —

ELECTRA.

A slave to thee,  
 Blundering bloodshedder, though  
 thou boast thyself  
 As huge as Ossa piled on Pelion,  
 Or anything but that weak wretch  
 thou art!  
 O, thou hast only half done thy  
 black work!  
 Thou shouldst have slain the young  
 lion with the old.  
 Look that he come not back, and  
 find himself  
 Ungiven food, and still the lion's  
 share!

ÆGISTHUS.

Insolent! but I know to seal thy  
 lips —

ELECTRA.

— For thou art only strong among  
 the weak.  
 We know thou hast an aptitude for  
 blood.  
 To take a woman's is an easy task,  
 And one well worthy thee.

ÆGISTHUS.

O, but for words!

ELECTRA.

Yet, couldst thou feed on all the noble blood  
Of godlike generations on this earth,  
It should not help thee to a hero's heart.

CHORUS.

O peace, Electra, but for pity's sake!  
Heap not his madness to such dangerous heights.

ELECTRA.

I will speak out my heart's scorn,  
though I die.

ÆGISTHUS.

And thou shalt die, but not till I have tamed  
That stubborn spirit to a wish for life.

CHORUS.

O cease, infatuate! I hear the Queen.

[*By a movement of the Eccyclema the palace is thrown open, and discovers CLYTEMNESTRA standing over the body of AGAMEMNON.*]

XIX. CLYTEMNESTRA. CHORUS. ÆGISTHUS. ELECTRA.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Argives! behold the man who was your King!

CHORUS.

Dead! dead!

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Not I, but Fate hath dealt this blow.

CHORUS.

Dead! dead, alas! look where he lies, O friends!  
That noble head, and to be brought so low!

CLYTEMNESTRA.

He who set light by woman, with blind scorn,  
And held her with the beasts we sacrifice,  
Lies, by a woman sacrificed himself.  
This is high justice which appeals to you.

CHORUS.

Alas! alas! I know not words for this.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

We are but as the instrument of heaven.

Our work is not design, but destiny.  
A God directs the lightning to its fall;

It smites and slays, and passes elsewhere,

Pure in itself, as when, in light, it left

The bosom of Olympus, to its end  
In this cold heart the wrong of all the past

Lies buried. I avenged, and I forgive.

Honor him yet. He is a king, though fallen.

CHORUS.

O, how she sets Virtue's own crest on Crime,

And stands there stern as Fate's wild arbitress!

Not any deed could make her less than great.

(*CLYTEMNESTRA descends the steps, and lays her hand on the arm of ÆGISTHUS.*)

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Put up the sword! Enough of blood is spilt.

ÆGISTHUS.

Hist! O, not half, — Orestes is escaped.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Sufficient for the future be that  
thought.  
What's done is well done. What's  
undone—yet more :  
Something still saved from crime.

ÆGISTHUS.

This lion's whelp  
Will work some mischief yet.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

He is a child—  
—Our own—we will but war upon  
the strong.  
Not upon infants. Let this matter  
rest.

ÆGISTHUS.

O, ever, in the wake of thy great  
will  
Let me steer sure! and we will leave  
behind  
Great tracks of light upon the won-  
dering world.  
If but you err not here—

CLYTEMNESTRA.

These pale-eyed groups !  
See how they huddle shuddering,  
and stand round ;  
As when some mighty beast, the  
brindled lord  
Of the rough woodside, sends his  
wild death-roar  
Up the shrill caves, the meaner  
denizens  
Of ancient woods, shy deer, and  
timorous hares,  
Peer from the hairy thickets, and  
shrink back.  
We feared the lion, and we smote  
him down.  
Now fear is over. Shall we turn  
aside  
To harry jackals ? Laugh ! we have  
not laughed  
So long, I think you have forgotten  
how !

Have we no right to laugh like  
other men ?  
Ha ! Ha ! I laugh. Now it is time  
to laugh !

CHORUS.

O, awful sight ! Look where the  
bloody sun,  
As though with Agamemnon he  
were slain,  
Runs reeking, lurid, down the palace  
floors !

CLYTEMNESTRA.

O my beloved ! Now we will reign  
sublime,  
And set our foot upon the neck of  
Fortune !  
And for the rest—O, much re-  
mains !—for you,

*(To the CHORUS.)*

A milder sway, if mildly you submit  
To our free service and supremacy.  
Nor tax, nor toll, to carry dim re-  
sults  
Of distant war beyond the perilous  
seas.  
But gateless justice in our halls of  
state,  
And peace in all the borders of our  
land !  
For you—

*(To ELECTRA, who has thrown  
herself upon the body of AGA-  
MEMNON.)*

ELECTRA.

O, hush ! What more remains to  
me,  
But this dead hand, whose clasp is  
cold in mine ?  
And all the baffled memory of the  
past,  
Buried with him ? What more ?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

—A mother's heart,  
If you will come to it. Free con-  
fidence.



A liberal share in all our future  
hope.

Now, more than ever — mutually  
weak —

We stand in need, each of the  
other's love.

Our love! it shall not sacrifice thee,  
child,

To wanton whims of war, as he, of  
old,

Did thy dead sister. If you will not  
these, [then —

But answer love with scorn, why

ELECTRA.

— What then?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Safe silence. And permission to  
forget.

XX. CHORUS. SEMI-CHORUS.

CLYTEMNESTRA. CASSAN-  
DRA. ÆGISTHUS.

CHORUS.

What shall we say? What has been  
done?

Shed no tear! O, shed no tear!  
Hang up his harness in the sun;  
The hookéd car, and barbéd spear;  
And all war's adamantine gear  
Of trophied spoils; for all his toils  
Are over, alas! are over, and done!  
What shall we say? What has been  
done?

Shed no tear! O, shed no tear!  
But keep solemn silence all,  
As befits when heroes fall;  
Solemn as his fame is; sad  
As his end was; earth shall wear  
Mourning for him. See, the sun  
Blushes red for what is done!  
And the wild stars, one by one,  
Peer out of the lurid air,  
And shrink back with awe and fear,  
Shuddering, for what is done.  
When the night comes, dark and  
dun

As our sorrow; blackness far  
Shutting out the crimson sun;

Turn his face to the moon and  
star, —

These are bright as his glories are,  
And great Heaven shall see its son!  
What shall we say? What has been  
done?

Shed no tear! O, shed no tear!  
Gather round him, friends! Look  
here!

All the wreaths which he hath won  
In the race that he hath run, —  
Laurel garlands, every one!  
These are things to think upon,  
Mourning till the set of sun,  
Till the mourning moon appear.  
Now the wreaths which Fame begun  
To uplift, to crown his head,  
Memory shall seize upon,  
And make chaplets for his bier.  
He shall have wreaths though he be  
dead!

But his monument is here,  
Built up in our hearts, and dear  
To all honor. Shed no tear!  
O, let not any tear be shed!

SEMI-CHORUS.

Look at Cassandra! she is stooping  
down.

SEMI-CHORUS.

She dips and moves her fingers in  
the blood!

SEMI-CHORUS.

Look to her! There's a wildness in  
her eye!

SEMI-CHORUS.

What does she?

SEMI-CHORUS.

O, in Agamemnon's blood,  
She hath writ *Orestes* on the palace  
steps!

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Ægisthus!

ÆGISTHUS.

Queen and bride!

CLYTEMNESTRA.

We have not failed.

CHORUS.

Come, venerable, and ancient Night!  
 From sources of the western stars,  
 In darkest shade that fits this woe.  
 Consoler of a thousand griefs,  
 And likest death unalterably calm.  
 We toil, aspire, and sorrow,  
 And in a little while shall cease.  
 For we know not whence we came,  
 And who can insure the morrow?  
 Thou, eternally the same,  
 From of old, in endless peace  
 Eternally survivest;  
 Enduring on through good and ill,  
 Coeval with the Gods; and still  
 In thine own silence livest.  
 Our days thou ledest home [Again!  
 To the great Whither which has no  
 Impartiality to pleasure and to pain  
 Thou sett'st the bourn. To thee  
 shall all things come.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

But, if he cease to love me, what  
 is gained?

CASSANDRA.

With wings darkly spreading,  
 Like ravens to the carcass  
 Scouting far off the savor of blood,  
 From shores of the unutterable  
 River.

They gather and swoop,  
 They waver, they darken.  
 From the fangs that raven,  
 From the eyes that glare  
 Intolerably fierce,  
 Save me, Apollo!  
 Ai! Ai! Ai!  
 Alinon! Alinon!  
 Blood, blood! and of kindred nature,  
 Which the young wolf returning  
 Shall dip his fangs in,  
 Thereby accursedly  
 Imbibing madness!

CHORUS.

The wild woman is uttering strange  
 things  
 Fearful to listen to.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Within the house  
 Straightway confine her,  
 There to learn wisdom.

ÆGISTHUS.

Orestes — O, this child's life now  
 outweighs  
 That mighty ruin, Agamemnon  
 dead!

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Ægisthus, dost thou love me?

ÆGISTHUS.

As my life!

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Thou lovest me! O love, we have  
 not failed.  
 Give me thy hand! So . . . lead me  
 to the house.  
 Let me lean on thee. I am very  
 weak.

CHORUS.

Only Heaven is high.  
 Only the Gods are great.  
 Above the searchless sky,  
 In unremoved state,  
 They from their golden mansions  
 Look over the lands, and the seas;  
 The ocean's wide expansions,  
 And the earth's varieties:  
 Secure of their supremacy,  
 And sure of affluent ease.  
 Who shall say, "I stand!" nor  
 fall?

Destiny is over all!  
 Rust will crumble old renown.  
 Bust and column tumble down;  
 Keep and castle; tower and town;  
 Throne and sceptre; crest and  
 crown.

Destiny is over all!  
 One by one the pale guests fall  
 At lighted feast, in palace hall;  
 And feast is turned to funeral.  
 Who shall say, "I stand!" nor  
 fall?

Destiny is over all!

## GOOD-NIGHT IN THE PORCH.

A LITTLE longer in the light, love, let me be. The air is warm.  
I hear the cuckoo's last good-night float from the copse below the Farm.  
A little longer, Sister sweet, — your hand in mine, — on this old seat.

In you red gable, which the rose creeps round and o'er, your casement  
shines

Against the yellow west, o'er those forlorn and solitary pines.  
The long, long day is nearly done. How silent all the place is grown !

The stagnant levels, one and all, are burning in the distant marsh —  
Hark ! 'twas the bittern's parting call. The frogs are out : with murmurs  
harsh

The low reeds vibrate. See ! the sun catches the long pools one by one.

A moment, and those orange flats will turn dead gray or lurid white.  
Look up ! o'erhead the winnowing bats are come and gone, eluding sight.  
The little worms are out. The snails begin to move down shiuing trails,

With slow pink cones, and soft wet horns. The garden-bowers are dim  
with dew.

With sparkling drops the white-rose thorns are twinkling, where the sun  
slips through

Those reefs of coral buds hung free below the purple Judas-tree.

From the warm upland comes a gust made fragrant with the brown hay  
there,

The meek cows, with their white horns thrust above the hedge, stand  
still and stare.

The steaming horses from the wains droop o'er the tank their-plaited  
manes.

And o'er you hillside brown and barren (where you and I as children  
played,

Starting the rabbit to his warren), I hear the sandy, shrill cascade  
Leap down upon the vale, and spill his heart out round the muffled mill.

O can it be for nothing only that God has shown his world to me?  
Or but to leave the heart more lonely with loss of beauty . . . can it be?  
O closer, closer, Sister dear . . . nay, I have kist away that tear.

God bless you, Dear, for that kind thought which only upon tears could  
rise !

God bless you for the love that sought to hide them in those drooping eyes,  
Whose lids I kiss ! . . . poor lids, so red ! but let my kiss fall there in-  
stead.

Yes, sad indeed it seems, each night, — and sadder, Dear, for your sweet  
sake!

To watch the last low lingering light, and know not where the morn may  
break,

To-night we sit together here. To-morrow night will come . . . ah,  
where?

O child! howe'er assured be faith, to say farewell is fraught with gloom.  
When, like one flower, the germs of death and genius ripen toward the  
tomb;

And earth each day, as some fond face at parting, gains a graver grace.

There's not a flower, there's not a tree in this old garden where we sit,  
But what some fragrant memory is closed and folded up in it.

To-night the dog-rose smells as wild, as fresh, as when I was a child.

'Tis eight years since (do you forget?) we set those lilies near the wall:  
You were a blue-eyed child: even yet I seem to see the ringlets fall, —  
The golden ringlets, blown behind your shoulders in the merry wind.

Ah, me! old times, they cling, they cling! And oft by yonder green old  
gate

The field shows through, in morns of spring, an eager boy, I paused elate  
With all sweet fancies loosed from school. And oft, you know, when  
eves were cool,

In summer-time, and through the trees young gnats began to be about,  
With some old book upon your knees 'twas here you watched the stars  
come out.

While oft, to please me, you sang through some foolish song I made for  
you.

And there's my epic — I began when life seemed long, though longer  
art —

And all the glorious deeds of man made golden riot in my heart —  
Eight books . . . It will not number nine! I die before my heroine.

Sister! they say that drowning men in one wild moment can recall  
Their whole life long, and feel again the pain — the bliss — that thronged  
it all: —

Last night those phantoms of the Past again came crowding round me  
fast.

Near morning, when the lamp was low, against the wall they seemed to  
flit;

And, as the wavering light would glow or fall, they came and went with  
it.

The ghost of boyhood seemed to gaze down the dark verge of vanished days.

Once more the garden where she walked on summer eves to tend her  
flowers,

Once more the lawn where first we talked of future years in twilight hours  
Arose; once more she seemed to pass before me in the waving grass

To that old terrace; her bright hair about her warm neck all undone,  
 And waving on the balmy air, with tinges of the dying sun.  
 Just one star kindling in the west: just one bird singing near its nest.

So lovely, so beloved! O, fair as though that sun had never set  
 Which stayed upon her golden hair, in dreams I seem to see her yet!  
 To see her in that old green place, — the same husht, smiling, cruel face!

A little older, love, than you are now; and I was then a boy;  
 And wild and wayward-hearted too; to her my passion was a toy,  
 Soon broken! ah, a foolish thing, — a butterfly with crumpled wing!

Her hair, too, was like yours, — as bright, but with a warmer golden tinge:  
 Her eyes, — a somewhat deeper light, and dreamed below a longer fringe:  
 And still that strange grave smile she had stays in my heart and keeps it  
 sad!

There's no one knows it, truest friend, but you, for I have never breathed  
 To other ears the frozen end of those spring-garlands Hope once wreathed;  
 And death will come before again I breathe that name untouched by pain!

From little things — a star, a flower — that touched us with the self-same  
 thought,

My passion deepened hour by hour, until to that fierce heat 'twas wrought,  
 Which, shrivelling over every nerve, crumbled the outworks of reserve.

I told her then, in that wild time, the love I knew she long had seen;  
 The accusing pain that burned like crime, yet left me nobler than I had  
 been;

What matter with what words I wooed her? She said I had misunderstood  
 her.

And something more — small matter what! of friendship something —  
 sister's love —

She said that I was young — knew not my own heart — as the years would  
 prove —

She wished me happy — she conceived an interest in me — and believed

I should grow up to something great — and soon forget her — soon forget  
 This fancy — and congratulate my life she had released it, yet —  
 With more such words — a lie! a lie! She broke my heart, and flung it by!

A life's libation lifted up, from her proud lip she dashed untasted:  
 There trampled lay love's costly cup, and in the dust the wine was  
 wasted.

She knew I could not pour such wine again at any other shrine.

Then I remember a numb mood: mad murmurings of the words she  
 said:

A slow shame smouldering through my blood; that surged and sung with-  
 in my head:

And drunken sunlights reeling through the leaves: above, the burnisht  
 blue

Hot on my eyes, — a blazing shield: a noise among the waterfalls:  
 A free crow up the brown cornfield floating at will: faint shepherd-calls:  
 And reapers reaping in the shocks of gold: and girls with purple frocks:  
 All which the more confused my brain: and nothing could I realize  
 But the great fact of my own pain: I saw the fields: I heard the cries:  
 The crow's shade dwindled up the hill: the world went on: my heart  
 stood still.

I thought I held in my hot hand my life crusht up: I could have tost  
 The crumpled riddle from me, and laughed loud to think what I had lost:  
 A bitter strength was in my mind: like Samson, when she scorned him —  
 blind,

And casting reckless arms about the props of life to hug them down, —  
 A madman with his eyes put out. But all my anger was my own.  
 I spared the worm upon my walk; I left the white rose on its stalk.

All's over long since. Was it strange that I was mad with grief and  
 shame?  
 And I would cross the seas, and change my ancient home, my father's  
 name?

In the wild hope, if that might be, to change my own identity!

I know that I was wrong: I know it was not well to be so wild.  
 But the scorn stung so! . . . Pity now could wound not! . . . I have  
 seen her child:

It had the self-same eyes she had: their gazing almost made me mad.

Dark violet eyes whose glances, deep with April hints of sunny tears,  
 'Neath long soft lashes laid asleep, seemed all too thoughtful for her  
 years;

As though from mine her gaze had caught the secret of some mournful  
 thought.

But, when she spoke her father's air broke o'er her . . . that clear con-  
 fident voice!

Some happy souls there are, that wear their nature lightly; these rejoice  
 The world by living; and receive from all men more than what they give.

One handful of their buoyant chaff exceeds our hoards of careful grain:  
 Because their love breaks through their laugh, while ours is fraught with  
 tender pain:

The world, that knows itself too sad, is proud to keep some faces glad:

And, so it is! from such an one Misfortune softly steps aside  
 To let him still walk in the sun. These things must be. I cannot chide.  
 Had I been she I might have made the self-same choice. She shunned  
 the shade.

To some men God hath given laughter; but tears to some men he hath  
 given

He bade us sow in tears, hereafter to harvest holier smiles in Heaven:  
 And tears and smiles, they are His gift; both good, to smite or to uplift.

He knows His sheep : the wind and showers beat not too sharply the  
shorn lamb :

His wisdom is more wise than ours : He knew my nature—what I am :  
He tempers smiles with tears : both good, to bear in time the Christian  
mood.

O yet—in scorn of mean relief, let Sorrow bear her heavenly fruit !  
Better the wildest hour of grief than the low pastime of the brute !  
Better to weep, for He wept too, than laugh as every fool can do !

For sure, 'twere best to bear the cross ; nor lightly fling the thorns  
behind ;

Lest we grow happy by the loss of what was noblest in the mind,  
—Here—in the ruins of my years—Father, I bless Thee through these  
tears !

It was in the far foreign lands this sickness came upon me first.  
Below strange suns, 'mid alien hands, this fever of the south was nursed,  
Until it reached some vital part. I die not of a broken heart.

O think not that ! If I could live . . . there's much to live for—  
worthy life.

It is not for what fame could give—though that I scorn not—but the strife  
Were noble for its own sake too. I thought that I had much to do—

But God is wisest ! Hark, again ! . . . 'twas yon black bittern, as he  
rose

Against the wild light o'er the fen. How red your little casement glows !  
The night falls fast. How lonely, Dear, this bleak old house will look  
next year !

So sad a thought ? . . . ah, yes ! I know it is not good to brood on this :  
And yet—such thoughts will come and go, unbidden. 'Tis that you  
should miss,

My darling, one familiar tone of this weak voice when I am gone.

And, for what's past,—I will not say in what she did that all was right,  
But all's forgiven ; and I pray for her heart's welfare, day and night.  
All things are changed ! This cheek would glow even near hers but  
faintly now !

Thou—God ! before whose sleepless eye not even in vain the sparrows  
fall,

Receive, sustain me ! Sanctify my soul. Thou know'st, Thou lovest all.  
Too weak to walk alone—I see Thy hand : I falter back to Thee.

Saved from the curse of time which throws its baseness on us day by day !  
Its wretched joys, and worthless woes ; till all the heart is worn away.  
I feel Thee near. I hold my breath, by the half-open doors of Death.

And sometimes, glimpses from within of glory (wondrous sight and  
sound !)

Float near me :—faces pure from sin ; strange music ; saints with splendour  
crowned :

I seem to feel my native air blow down from some high region there,

And fan my spirit pure : I rise above the sense of loss and pain :

Faint forms that lured my childhood's eyes, long lost, I seem to find  
again :

see the end of all : I feel hope, awe, no language can reveal.

Forgive me, Lord, if overmuch I loved that form Thou mad'st so fair ;

I know that Thou didst make her such ; and fair but as the flowers  
were,—

Thy work : her beauty was but Thine ; the human less than the divine.

My life hath been one search for Thee 'mid thorns found red with Thy  
dear blood ;

In many a dark Gethsemanë I seemed to stand where Thou hadst stood :

And, scorned in this world's Judgment-Place, at times, through tears, to  
catch Thy face.

Thou suffered'st here, and didst not fail : Thy bleeding feet these paths  
have trod :

But Thou wert strong, and I am frail : and I am man, and Thou wert  
God.

Be near me : keep me in Thy sight : or lay my soul asleep in light.

O to be where the meanest mind is more than Shakespeare ! where one  
look

Shows more than here the wise can find, though toiling slow from book to  
book !

Where life is knowledge : love is sure : and hope's brief promise made  
secure.

O dying voice of human praise ! the crude ambitions of my youth !

I long to pour immortal lays ! great pæans of perennial Truth !

A larger work ! a loftier aim ! . . . and what are laurel-leaves and fame ?

And what are words ? How little these the silence of the soul express !

Mere froth,—the foam and flower of seas whose hungering waters heave  
and press

Against the planets and the sides of night,—mute, yearning, mystic  
tides !

To ease the heart with song is sweet : sweet to be heard if heard by love.

And you have heard me. When we meet shall we not sing the old songs  
above

To grander music ? Sweet, one kiss. O blest it is to die like this !

To lapse from being without pain : your hand in mine, on mine your  
heart :

The unshaken faith to meet again that sheathes the pang with which we  
part :

My head upon your bosom, sweet : your hand in mine, on this old seat !



So ; closer wind that tender arm . . . How the hot tears fall ! Do not weep,  
Beloved, but let your smile stay warm about me. "In the Lord they sleep."  
You know the words the Scripture saith . . . O light, O Glory ! . . . is this death ?

## THE EARL'S RETURN.

<p><b>RAGGED</b> and tall stood the castle wall And the squires at their sport, in the great South Court, Lounged all day long from stable to hall Laughingly, lazily, one and all. The land about was barren and blue, And swept by the wing of the wet sea-mew. Seven fishermen's huts on a shelly shore ; Sand-heaps behind, and sand-banks before ; And a black champaign streaked white all through To a great salt pool which the ocean drew, Sucked into itself, and disgorged it again To stagnate and steam on the mineral plain ; Not a tree or a bush in the circle of sight, But a bare black thorn which the sea-winds had withered With the drifting scum of the surf and blight, And some patches of gray grass-land to the right, Where the lean red-hided cattle were tethered : A reef of rock wedged the water in twain, And a stout stone tower stood square to the main.</p>	<p>And the flakes of the spray that were jerked away From the froth on the lip of the bleak blue sea Were sometimes flung by the wind, as it swung Over turret and terrace and balcony, To the garden below where, in desolate corners Under the mossy green parapet there, The lilies crouched, rocking their white heads like mourners, And burned off the heads of the flowers that were Pining and pale in their comfortless bowers, Dry-bushed with the sharp stubborn lavender, And paven with disks of the torn sunflowers, Which, day by day, were strangled, and stripped Of their ravelling fringes and brazen bosses, And the hardy mary-buds nipped and ripped Into shreds for the beetles that lurked in the mosses.</p> <p>Here she lived alone, and from year to year [appear She saw the black belt of the ocean At her casement each morn as she rose ; and each morn Her eye fell first on the bare black thorn.</p>
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This was all: nothing more: or  
 sometimes on the shore  
 The fishermen sang when the fish-  
 ing was o'er;  
 Or the lowing of oxen fell dreamily,  
 Close on the shut of the glimmering  
 eyes,  
 Through some gusty pause in the  
 moaning sea,  
 When the pools were splashed pink  
 by the thirsty bees  
 Or sometimes, when the pearl-  
 lighted morns drew the tinges  
 Of the cold sunrise up their amber  
 fringes,  
 A white sail peered over the rim of  
 the main,  
 Looked all about o'er the empty sea,  
 Staggering back from the fine line  
 of white light again,  
 And dropped down to another world  
 silently.  
 Then she breathed freer. With  
 sickening dread  
 She had watched five pale young  
 moons unfold  
 From their notchy cavern in light,  
 and spread  
 To the fuller light, and again grow  
 old, [shred.  
 And dwindle away to a luminous  
 "He will not come back till the  
 Spring's green and gold.  
 And I would that I with the leaves  
 were dead,  
 Quiet somewhere with them in the  
 moss and the mould,  
 When he and the summer come this  
 way," she said.  
 And when the dull sky darkened  
 down to the edges,  
 And the keen frost kindled in star  
 and spar,  
 The sea might be known by a noise  
 on the ledges  
 Of the long crags, gathering power  
 from afar  
 Through his roaring bays, and  
 crawling back [dragged  
 Hissing, as o'er the wet pebbles he  
 His skirt of foam frayed, dripping,  
 and jagged,  
 And reluctantly fell down the smooth  
 hollow shell  
 Of the night, whose lustrous surface  
 of black  
 In spots to an intense blue was  
 worn. [bar  
 But later, when up on the sullen sea-  
 The wide large-lighted moon had  
 arisen,  
 Where the dark and voluminous  
 ocean grew luminous,  
 Helping after her slowly one little  
 shy star  
 That shook blue in the cold, and  
 looked forlorn,  
 The clouds were troubled, and the  
 wind from his prison  
 Behind them leaped down with a  
 light laugh of scorn;  
 Then the last thing she saw was  
 that bare black thorn;  
 Or the forked tree, as the bleak  
 blast took it,  
 Howled through it, and beat it, and  
 bit it, and shook it,  
 Seemed to visibly waste and wither  
 and wizen.  
 And the snow was lifted into the air  
 layer by layer,  
 And turned into vast white clouds  
 that flew  
 Silent and fleet up the sky, and  
 were riven  
 And jerked into chasms which the  
 sun leaped through,  
 Opening crystal gulfs of a breezy  
 blue  
 Fed with rainy lights of the April  
 heaven.  
 From eaves and leaves the quivering  
 dew  
 Sparkled off; and the rich earth,  
 black and bare,  
 Was starred with snowdrops every  
 where;  
 And the crocus upturned its flame,  
 and burned

Here and there.

“The Summer,” she said, “cometh  
blithe and bold ;  
And the crocus is lit for her welcom-  
ing ;  
And the days will have garments of  
purple and gold ;  
But I would be left by the pale green  
Spring  
With the snowdrops somewhere  
under the mould ;  
For I dare not think what the  
Summer may bring.”

Pale she was as the bramble blooms  
That fill the long fields with their  
faint perfumes,  
When the May-wind flits finely  
through sun-threaded showers,  
Breathing low to himself in his dim  
meadow-bowers.

And her cheek each year was paler  
and thinner,  
And white as the pearl that was hung  
at her ear,  
As her sad heart sickened and pined  
within her,  
And failed and fainted from year to  
year.

So that the Seneschal, rough and  
gray,  
Said, as he looked in her face one  
day,

“St. Catherine save all good souls,  
I pray,  
For our pale young lady is paling  
away.

O the Saints,” he said, smiling bitter  
and grim,

“Know she’s too fair and too good for  
him !”

Sometimes she walked on the upper  
leads,  
And leaned on the arm of the  
weatherworn Warden.

Sometimes she sat ’twixt the mildewy  
beds

Of the sea-singed flowers in the  
Pleasaunce Garden.

Till the rotting blooms that lay  
thick on the walks

Were combed by the white sea-gust  
like a rake,  
And the stimulant steam of the  
leaves and stalks  
Made the coiléd memory, numb and  
cold,  
That slept in her heart like a dream-  
ing snake,  
Drowsily lift itself, fold by fold,  
And gnaw and gnaw hungrily, half  
awake.

Sometimes she looked from the  
window below

To the great South Court and the  
squires, at their sport,  
Loungingly loitering to and fro.

She heard the grooms there as they  
cursed one another.

She heard the great bowls falling all  
day long

In the bowling-alleys. She heard  
the song

Of the shock-headed Pages that drank  
without stint in

The echoing courts, and swore hard  
at each other.

She saw the red face of the rough  
wooden Quintin,

And the swinging sand-bag ready  
to smother

The awkward Squire that missed the  
mark.

And, all day long, between the dull  
noises

Of the bowls, and the oaths, and the  
singing voices,

The sea boomed hoarse till the skies  
were dark.

But when the swallow, that sweet  
new-comer,

Floated over the sea in the front of  
the summer,

The salt dry sands burned white, and  
sickened

Men’s sight in the glaring horn of the  
bay ;

And all things that fasten, or float at  
ease

In the silvery light of the leprous  
seas

With the pulse of a hideous life were  
 quickened,  
 Fell loose from the rocks, and  
 crawled crosswise away,  
 Slippery sidelong crabs, half  
 strangled  
 By the white sea grasses in which  
 they were tangled,  
 And those half-living creatures,  
 orbéd, rayed, and sharp-  
 angled,  
 Fan-fish, and star-fish, and polypous  
 lumps,  
 Hueless and boneless, that languidly  
 thickened,  
 Or flat-faced, or spikéd, or ridgéd  
 with humps,  
 Melting off from their clotted clusters  
 and clumps  
 Sprawled over the shore in the heat  
 of the day.  
 An hour before the sun was set  
 A darker ripple rolled over the sea ;  
 The white rocks quivered in wells of  
 jet ;  
 And the great West, opening breath-  
 lessly  
 Up all his inmost orange, gave  
 Hints of something distant and  
 sweet  
 That made her heart swell ; far up  
 the wave  
 The clouds that lay piled in the  
 golden heat  
 Were turned into types of the an-  
 cient mountains  
 In an ancient land ; the weeds,  
 which forlorn  
 Waves were swaying neglectfully,  
 By their sounds, as they dipped into  
 sparkles that dripped  
 In the emerald creeks that ran up  
 from the shore,  
 Brought back to her fancy the bub-  
 ble of fountains  
 Leaping and falling continually  
 In valleys where she should wander  
 no more.  
 And when, over all of these, the  
 night

Among her mazy and milk white  
 signs,  
 And clustered orbs, and zigzag lines,  
 Burst into blossom of stars and  
 light,  
 The sea was glassy ; the glassy brine  
 Was paven with lights,—blue, crys-  
 talline,  
 And emerald keen ; the dark world  
 hung  
 Balanced under the moon, and  
 swung  
 In a net of silver sparkles. Then  
 she  
 Rippled her yellow hair to her knee,  
 Bared her warm white bosom and  
 throat,  
 And from the lattice leaned athirst.  
 There, on the silence did she gloat  
 With a dizzy pleasure steeped in  
 pain,  
 Half catching the soul of the secret  
 that blended  
 God with his starlight, then feeling  
 it vain,  
 Like a pining poet ready to burst  
 With the weight of the wonder that  
 grows in his brain,  
 Or a nightingale, mute at the sound  
 of a lute  
 That is swelling and breaking his  
 heart with its strain,  
 Waiting, breathless, to die when the  
 music is ended.  
 For the sleek and beautiful midnight  
 stole,  
 Like a faithless friend, her secret  
 care,  
 Crept through each pore to the  
 source of the soul,  
 And mocked at the anguish which he  
 found there,  
 Shining away from her, scornful and  
 fair  
 In his pitiless beauty, refusing to  
 share  
 The discontent which he could not  
 control.  
 The water-rat, as he skulked in the  
 moat,

Set all the slumbrous lilies afloat,  
 And sent a sharp quick pulse along  
 The stagnant light, that heaved and  
     swung  
 The leaves together. Suddenly  
 At times a shooting star would spin  
 Shell-like out of heaven, and tumble  
     in,  
 And burst o'er a city of stars ; but  
     she,  
 As he dashed on the back of the zo-  
     diac,  
 And quivered and glowed down arc  
     and node,  
 And split sparkling into infinity,  
 Thought that some angel, in his rever-  
     eries  
 Thinking of earth, as he pensively  
 Leaned over the star-grated balcony  
 In his palace among the Pleiades,  
 And grieved for the sorrow he saw  
     in the land,  
 Had dropped a white lily from his  
     loose hand.  
  
 And thus many a night, steeped pale  
     in the light  
 Of the stars, when the bells and  
     clocks  
 Had ceased in the towers, and the  
     sound of the hours  
 Was eddying about in the rocks,  
 Deep-sunken in bristling broidery  
     between the black oak Fiends  
     sat she,  
 And under the moth-flitted canopy  
 Of the mighty antique bed in her  
     chamber,  
 With wild eyes drinking up the sea,  
 And her white hands heavy with  
     jewelry,  
 Flashing as she loosed languidly  
 Her satins of snow and of amber.  
 And as, fold by fold, these were rip-  
     pled and rolled  
 To her feet, and lay huddled in ruins  
     of gold,  
 She looked like some pale spirit  
     above  
 Earth's dazzling passions forever  
     flung by,

Freed from the stains of an earthly  
     love,  
 And those splendid shackles of pride  
     that press  
 On the heart till it aches with the  
     gorgeous stress,  
 Quitting the base Past remorsefully.  
 And so she put by the coil and care  
 Of the day that lay furled like an  
     idle weft  
 Of heaped spots which a bright snake  
     hath left,  
 Or that dark house, the blind worm's  
     lair,  
 When the star-wingéd moth from  
     the windows hath crept,  
 Steeped her soul in a tearful prayer,  
 Shrank into her naked self, and  
     slept.  
  
 And as she slumbered, starred and  
     eyed  
 All over with angry gems, at her  
     side,  
 The Fiends in the oak kept ward  
     and watch ;  
 And the querulous clock, on its rusty  
     catch,  
 With a quick tick, husky and thick,  
 Clamored and clacked at her sharply,  
     There was  
 (Fronting a portrait of the Earl)  
 A shrine with a dim green lamp, and  
     a cross  
 Of glowing cedar wreathed with  
     pearl, [writ,  
 Which the Arimathæan, so it was  
 When he came from the holy Orient,  
 Had worn, with his prayers embalm-  
     ing it,  
 As with the San-Grael through the  
     world he went.  
 Underneath were relics and gems  
 From many an antique king-saint's  
     crown,  
 And some ('twas avouched) from the  
     dusk diadems  
 And mighty rings of those Wise  
     Kings  
 That evermore sleep 'mid the mar-  
     ble stems,

'Twixt chancel and chalice in God  
his palace,  
The marvel of Cologne Town.  
In a halo dim of the lamp all night  
Smiled the sad Virgin, holy and  
white,  
With a face as full of the soul's af-  
fliction  
As one that had looked on the Cru-  
cifixion.

At moonrise the land was suddenly  
brighter ;  
And through all its length and  
breadth the casement  
Grew large with a luminous strange  
amazement,  
And, as doubting in dreams what  
that sudden blaze meant,  
The Lady's white face turned a  
thought whiter.  
Sometimes in sleep light finger-tips  
Touched her behind ; the pain, the  
bliss  
Of a long slow despairing kiss  
Doubled the heat on her feverish  
lips,  
And down to her heart's-heart  
smouldering burned ;  
From lips long mute she heard her  
name ;  
Sad dreams and sweet to vex her  
came ;  
Sighing, upon her pillow, she turned,  
Like a weary waif on a weary sea  
That is heaving over continually,  
And finds no course, until for its  
sake  
The heart of the silence begins to  
ache.  
Unsoothed from slumber she awoke  
An hour ere dawn. The lamp  
burned faint.  
The Fiends glared at her out of the  
oak.  
She rose, and fell at the shrine of  
the Saint.  
There with clasped hands to the  
Mother  
Of many sorrows, in sorrow, she  
prayed ;

Till all things in the room melted  
into each other,  
And vanished in gyres of flickering  
shade,  
Leaving her all alone, with the face  
Of the Saint growing large in its one  
bright place.  
Then on a sudden, from far, a fear  
Through all her heart its horror  
drew,  
As of something hideous growing  
near.  
Cold fingers seemed roaming through  
her damp hair ;  
Her lips were locked. The power of  
prayer  
Left her. She dared not turn. She  
knew,  
From his panel atilt on the wall up  
there,  
The grim Earl was gazing her  
through and through.

But when the casement, a grisly  
square,  
Flickered with day, she flung it wide,  
And looked below. The shore was  
bare.  
In the mist tumbled the dismal tide.  
One ghastly pool seemed solid white ;  
The forked shadow of the thorn  
Fell through it, like a raven rent  
In the steadfast blank down which  
it went.  
The blind world slowly gathered  
sight.  
The sea was moaning on to morn.

And the Summer into the Autumn  
waned.  
And under the watery Hyades  
The gray sea swelled, and the thick  
rained,  
And the land was darkened by slow  
degrees.  
But oft, in the low West, the day  
Smouldering sent up a sullen flame  
Along the dreary waste of gray,  
As though in that red region lay,  
Heaped up, like Autumn weeds and  
flowers

For fire, its thorny fruitless hours,  
And God said, "burn it all away!"

When all was dreariest in the skies,  
And the gusty tract of twilight mut-  
tered,

A strange slow smile grew into her  
eyes,

As though from a great way off it  
came

And was weary ere down to her lips  
it fluttered,

And turned into a sigh, or some soft  
name

Whose syllables sounded likest sighs,  
Half smothered in sorrow before  
they were uttered.

Sometimes, at night, a music was  
rolled—

A ripple of silver harp-strings cold—  
From the halls below where the  
Minstrel sung,

With the silver hair, and the golden  
tongue,

And the eyes of passionless, peaceful  
blue

(Like twilight which faint stars gaze  
through),

Wise with the years which no man  
knew.

And first the music, as though the  
wings

Of some blind angel were caught in  
the strings,

Fluttered with weak endeavor : anon  
The uncaged heart of music grew  
bold

And cautiously loosened, length by  
length,

The golden cone of its great under-  
tone,

Like a strong man using mild lan-  
guage to one

That is weaker, because he is sure of  
his strength.

But once—and it was at the fall of  
the day, [seem

When she, if she closed her eyes, did  
To be wandering far, in a sort of

dream,

With some lost shadow, away,  
away,

Down the heart of a golden land  
which she

Remembered a great way over the  
sea,

There came a trample of horses and  
men ;

And a blowing of horns at the Castle-  
Gate ;

Then a clattering noise ; then a  
pause ; and then,

With the sudden jerk of a heavy  
weight,

And a wrangling and jangling and  
clinking and clanking,

The sound of the falling of cable and  
chain ;

And a grumbling over the dewy  
planking

That shrieked and sung with the  
weight and strain ;

And the rough Seneschal bawled out  
in the hall,

"The Earl and the Devil are come  
back again !"

Her heart stood still for a moment  
or more.

Then suddenly tugged, and strained,  
and tore

At the roots, which seemed to give  
way beneath.

She rushed to the window, and held  
her breath.

High up on the beach were the long  
black ships

And the brown sails hung from the  
masts in strips :

And the surf was whirled over and  
over them,

And swept them dripping from stern  
to stem.

Within, in the great square court be-  
low,

Were a hundred rough-faced men,  
or so.

And one or two pale fair-haired  
slaves

Whom the Earl had brought over  
the winter waves.

There was a wringing of horny  
 hands ;  
 And a swearing of oaths ; and a great  
 deal of laughter ;  
 The grim Earl growling his hoarse  
 commands  
 To the Warden that followed him  
 growling after ;  
 A lowing of cattle along the wet  
 sands ;  
 And a plashing of hoofs on the slip-  
 pery rafter,  
 As the long-tailed black-maned  
 horses each  
 Went over the bridge from the gray  
 sea-beach.

Then quoth the grim Earl, "fetch  
 me a stoop !"  
 And they brought him a great bowl  
 that dripped from the brim,  
 Which he seized upon with a satis-  
 fied whoop,  
 Drained, and flung at the head of  
 him  
 That brought it ; then, with a laugh  
 like a howl,  
 Stroked his beard ; and strode in  
 through the door with a growl.  
 Meanwhile the pale lady grew white  
 and whiter,  
 As the poplar pales when the keen  
 winds smite her :  
 And, as the tree sways to the gust,  
 and heaves  
 Quick ripples of white alarm up the  
 leaves,  
 So did she seem to shrink and reel  
 From the casement—one quiver from  
 head to heel  
 Of whitest fear. For she heard be-  
 low,  
 On the creaking stairway loud and  
 slow,  
 Like drops that plunge audibly down  
 from the thunder  
 Into a sea that is groaning under,  
 The heavy foot of the Earl as he  
 mounted  
 Step after step to the turret : she  
 counted

Step after step, as he hastened or  
 halted ;  
 Now clashing shrill through the  
 archways vaulted ;  
 Now muffled and thick ; now loud,  
 and more  
 Loud as he came near the Chamber  
 door.  
 Then there fell, with a rattle and  
 shock,  
 An iron glove on the iron lock,  
 And the door burst open—the Earl  
 burst through it—  
 But she saw him not. The window-  
 pane,  
 Far off, grew large and small again ;  
 The staggering light did wax and  
 wane,  
 Till there came a snap of the heavy  
 brain ;  
 And a slow-subsiding pulse of pain ;  
 And the whole world darkened into  
 rest,  
 As the grim Earl pressed to his  
 gruesome breast  
 His white wife. She hung heavy  
 there  
 On his shoulder without breath,  
 Darkly filled with sleepy death  
 From her heart up to her eyes ;  
 Dead asleep : and ere he knew it  
 (How Death took her by surprise  
 Helpless in her great despair)  
 Smoothing back her yellow hair,  
 He kissed her icy brows : unwound  
 His rough arms, and she fell to the  
 ground.

*"The woman was fairer than she  
 was wise :  
 But the serpent was wiser than she  
 was fair :*  
*For the serpent was lord in Paradise  
 Or ever the woman came there.  
 But when Eden-gates were barred  
 amain,  
 And the fiery sword on guard in the  
 East,  
 The lion arose from a long repose,  
 And quoth he, as he shook out his  
 royal mane,*



'Now I am the strongest beast.'  
 Had the woman been wiser when she  
 was queen  
 The lion had never been king, I  
 ween.

But ever since storms began to lower  
 Beauty on earth hath been second to  
 Power."

And this is the song that the Minstrel  
 sung,  
 With the silver hair and the golden  
 tongue,  
 Who sung by night in the grim Earl's  
 hall.  
 And they held him in reverence one  
 and all.

And so she died,—the pale-faced  
 girl.

And, for nine days after that, the  
 Earl

Fumed and fret, and raved and  
 swore,

Pacing up and down the chamber-  
 floor,

And tearing his black beard as he  
 went,

In the fit of his sullen discontent.

And the Seneschal said it was fear-  
 ful to hear him ;

And not even the weather-worn  
 Warden went near him ;

And the shock-headed Pages huddled  
 anear,

And bit their white lips till they bled,  
 for fear.

But at last he bade them lift her  
 lightly,

And bury her by the gray sea-shore,  
 Where the winds that blew from her

own land nightly

Might wail round her grave through  
 the wild rocks hoar.

So they lifted her lightly at dead of  
 night,

And bore her down by the long torch-  
 light,—

Lank-haired faces, sallow and keen,  
 That burned out of the glassy pools  
 between

The splashing sands which, as they  
 plunged through,

The coffin-lead weighed them down  
 into ;

And their feet, as they plucked them  
 up, left pits

Which the water oozed into and out  
 of by fits—

—And so to the deep-mouthed bay'  
 black brim,

Where the pale priests, all white-  
 stoled and dim,

Lifted the cross and chanted the  
 hymn,

That her soul might have peace when  
 her bones were dust,

And her name be written among the  
 Just.

The Warden walked after the Sen-  
 eschal grim ;

And the shock-headed Pages walked  
 after him :

And with mattock and spade a grave  
 was made,

Where they carved the cross, and  
 they wrote her name,

And, returning each by the way that  
 he came,

They left her under the bare black  
 thorn.

The salt sea-wind sang shrill in the  
 head of it ;

And the bitter night grew chill with  
 the dread of it ;

When the great round moon rose up  
 forlorn

From the reefs, and whitened to-  
 wards the morn.

For the forked tree, as the bleak  
 blast took it,

Howled through it, and beat it, and  
 bit it, and shook it,

Like a living thing, bewitched and  
 bedeviled.

Visibly shrunk, and shuddered and  
 shrivelled.

And again the swallow, that false  
 new-comer,

Flattered over the sea in the front  
 of the summer;  
 A careless singer, as he should be  
 That only skimmeth the mighty sea;  
 Dipped his wings as he came and  
 went,  
 And chirruped and twittered for  
 heart's content,  
 And built on the new-made grave.  
 But when  
 The Summer was over he flew back  
 again.  
 And the Earl, as years went by, and  
 his life  
 Grew listless, took him another wife:  
 And the Seneschal grim and the  
 Wardeu gray  
 Walked about in their wonted way:  
 And the lean-jawed, shock-haired  
 Pages too  
 Sung and swilled as they used to do.  
 And the grooms and the squires  
 gamed and swore  
 And quarrelled again as they quar-  
 relled before;  
 And the flowers decayed in their  
 dismal beds,  
 And dropped off from their lean  
 shanks one by one,  
 Till nothing was left but the stalks  
 and the heads,  
 Clumped into heaps, or ripped into  
 shreds,  
 To steam into salt in the sickly sun.  
 And the cattle lowed late up the  
 glimmering plain,  
 Or dipped knee-deep, and splashed  
 themselves  
 In the pools spat out by the spiteful  
 main,  
 Wallowing in sandy dykes and  
 delves: [boom  
 And the blear-eyed filmy sea did  
 With his old mysterious hungering  
 sound:  
 And the wet wind wailed in the  
 chinks of the tomb,  
 Till the weeds in the surf were  
 drenched and drowned.

But once a stranger came over the  
 wave,  
 And paused by the pale-faced Lady's  
 grave.

It was when, just about to set,  
 A sadness held the sinking sun.  
 The moon delayed to shine as yet:  
 The Ave-Mary chime was done:  
 And from the bell-tower, leaned the  
 ringers;  
 And in the chancel paused the  
 singers,  
 With lingering looks and clasped  
 fingers:  
 And the day reluctantly turned to  
 his rest,  
 Like some untold life, that leaves  
 express  
 But the half of its hungering love  
 ere it close:  
 So he went sadly toward his repose  
 Deep in the heart of the slumbrons  
 waves  
 Kindled far off in the desolate West.  
 And the breeze sprang up in the cool  
 sea-caves,  
 The castle stood with its courts in  
 shade,  
 And all its toothéd towers imprest  
 On the sorrowful light that sunset  
 made.—  
 Such a light as sleeps shut up in the  
 breast [rose,  
 Of some pining crimson-hearted  
 Which, as you gaze at it, grows  
 and grows  
 And all the warm leaves overflows;  
 Leaving its sweet source still to be  
 guest.  
 The crumpled shadow of the thorn  
 Crawled over the sand-heaps rag-  
 gedly,  
 And over the gray stone cross for-  
 lorn, [there  
 And on to that one man musing  
 Moveless, while o'er him the night  
 crept on,  
 And the hot yellow stars slowly, one  
 after one,

Mounted into the dark blue air  
 And brightened, and brightened.  
 Then suddenly,  
 And sadly and silently,  
 Down the dim breezy brink of the  
 sea sank the sun.

Ere the moon was abroad, the owl  
 Made himself heard in the echoing  
 tower  
 Three times, four times. The bat  
 with his cowl  
 Came and went round the lonely  
 Bower  
 Where dwelt of yore the Earl's lost  
 Lady.  
 There night after night, for years, in  
 vain  
 The lingering moon had looked  
 through the pane,  
 And missed the face she used to find  
 there,  
 White and wan like some mountain  
 flower  
 In its rocky nook, as it paled and  
 pined there,  
 Only known to the moon and the  
 wind there.  
 Lights flitted faint in the halls down  
 lower  
 From lattice to lattice, and then  
 glowed steady.

The dipping gull: and the long gray  
 pool:  
 And the reed that shows which way  
 the breeze blows cool,  
 From the wide warm sea to the low  
 black land:  
 And the wave makes no sound on  
 the soft yellow sand:  
 But the inland shallows sharp and  
 small  
 Are swarmed about with the sultry  
 midge.  
 And the land is still, and the ocean  
 still:  
 And the weeds in the rifted rocks at  
 will  
 Move on the tide, and float or glide.  
 And into the silent western side

Of the heaven the moon begins to  
 fall.  
 But is it the fall of a plover's call  
 That is answered warily, low yet  
 shrill,  
 From the sand-heapt mound and the  
 rocky ridge?  
 And now o'er the dark plain, so  
 wild and wide  
 Falls the note of a horn from the old  
 drawbridge.  
 Who is it that waits at the castle-  
 gates?  
 Call in the minstrel, and fill the  
 bowl.  
 Bid him loose the great music and  
 let the song roll.  
 Fill the bowl.  
 And first, as was due, to the Earl he  
 bowed:  
 Next to all the Sea-chieftains, blithe  
 friends of the Earl's:  
 Then advanced through the praise  
 of the murmuring crowd,  
 And sat down, as they bade him,  
 and all his black curls  
 Bowed over his harp, as in doubt  
 which to choose  
 From the melodies coiled at his  
 heart. For a man  
 O'er some Beauty asleep for one  
 moment might muse,  
 Half in love, ere he woke her. So  
 ere he began,  
 He paused over his song. And they  
 brought him, the Squires,  
 A heavy gold cup with the red wine  
 ripe in it,  
 Then wave over wave of the sweet  
 silver wires  
 'Gan ripple, and the minstrel took  
 heart to begin it.  
 A harper that harps through moun-  
 tain and glen,  
 Wandring, wandering the wide  
 world over,  
 Sweetest of singers, yet saddest of  
 men,  
 His soul's lost Lady in vain to dis-  
 cover.

<p>Most fair and most frail of the daughters of men,  O blest and O curst, the man that should love her !  Who has not loved ? and who has not lost ?  Wherever he wander, the wide world over,  Singing by city, and castle, and plain,  Abiding never, forever a rover,  Each man that shall hear him will swear almost  In the minstrel's song that his heart can discover  The self-same lady by whom it was crost,  For love is love the wide world over.</p> <p>What shall he liken his love unto ?  Have you seen some cloud the sun sets through,  When the lingering night is close at hand ?  Have you seen some rose lie on the snow ?  Or a summer bird in a winter land ?  Or a lily dying for dearth of dew ?  Or a pearl sea-cast on a barren strand ?  Some garden never sunshine warms  Nor any tend ? some lonely tree  That stretches bleak its barren arms  Turned inland from the blighting sea ?  Her cheek was pale : her face was fair :  Her heart, he sung, was weak and warm ;  All golden was the sleepy hair  That floated round about her form,  And hid the sweetness breathing there.  Her eyes were wild, like stars that shine  Far off in summer nights divine :  But her smile—it was like the golden wine  Poured into the spirit, as into a cup,  With passion brimming it up and up,</p>	<p>And marvellous fancies fair and fine.  He took her hair to make sweet strings :  He hid her smile deep in his song.  This makes so rich the tune he sings  That o'er the world 'twill linger long.</p> <p>There is a land far, far away from yours.  And there the stars are thrice as bright as these.  And there the nightingale strange music pours  All day out of the hearts of myrtle-trees.  There the voice of the cuckoo sounds never forlorn  As you hear it far off through the deep purple valleys  And the fire-fly dances by night in the corn.  And the little round owls in the long cypress alleys  Whoop for joy when the moon is born. [tree,  There ripen the olive and the tulip  And in the sun broadens the green prickly pear ;  And the bright galingales in the grass you may see ;  And the vine, with her royal blue globes, dwelleth there,  Climbing and hanging deliciously  By every doorway and lone latticed chamber,  Where the damsel-fly flits, and the heavy brown bee  Hums alone, and the quick lizzards rustle and clamber.  And all things, there, live and rejoice together,  From the frail peach blossom that first appears  When birds are about in the blue summer weather,  To the oak that has lived through his eight hundred years.  And the castles are built on the hills, not the plains.</p>
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(And the wild wind-flowers burn  
about in the courts there)  
They are white and undrenched by  
the gray winter rains.  
And the swallows, and all things,  
are blithe at their sports  
there.  
O for one moment, at sunset, to  
stand [land  
Far, far away, in that dear distant  
Whence they bore her, — the loveliest  
lady that ever  
Cross the bleak ocean. O, never-  
more, never,  
Shall she stand with her feet in the  
warm dry grasses  
Where the faint balm-heaving  
breeze heavily passes  
And the white lotus-flower leans  
lone on the river.  
Rare were the gems which she had  
for her dower.  
But all the wild-flowers she left be-  
hind her.  
— A broken heart and a rose-roofed  
bower.  
O oft, and in many a desolate hour,  
The cold strange faces she sees shall  
remind her  
Of hearts that were warmer, and  
smiles that were kinder,  
Lost, like the roses they plucked  
from her bower!  
Lonely and far from her own land  
they laid her!  
— A swallow flew over the sea to  
find her.  
Ah cold, cold and narrow, the bed  
that they made her!  
The swallow went forth with the  
summer to find her.  
The summer and the swallow came  
back o'er the sea,  
And strange were the tidings the  
bird brought to me.  
And the minstrel sung, and they  
praised and listened, —  
Gazed and praised while the min-  
strel sung.

Flushed was each cheek, and each  
fixt eye glistened,  
And husht was each voice to the  
minstrel's tongue.  
But the Earl grew paler more and  
more  
As the song of the Singer grew  
louder and clearer,  
And so dumb was the hall, you  
might hear the roar  
Of the sea in its pauses grow nearer  
and drearer.  
And . . . hush! hush! hush!  
O was it the wind? or was it the  
rush  
Of the restless waters that tumble  
and splash  
On the wild sea-rocks? or was it  
the crash  
Of stones on the old wet bridge up  
there?  
Or the sound of the tempest come  
over the main?  
— Nay, but just now the night was  
fair. [rain  
Was it the march of the midnight  
Clattering down in the courts? or  
the crash  
Of armor yonder? . . . Listen  
again!  
Can it be lightning? can it be thun-  
der?  
For a light is all round the lurid  
hall  
That reddens and reddens the win-  
dows all,  
And far away you may hear the fall  
As of rafter and bowlder splitting  
asunder.  
It is not the thunder, and it is not  
the lightning  
To which the castle is sounding and  
brightening,  
But something worse than lightning  
or thunder,  
For what is this that is coming you-  
der?  
Which way? Here! Where?  
Call the men! . . . Is it there?

Call them out! Ring the bell!  
 Ring the Fiend back to Hell!  
 Ring, ring the alarum for mercy!  
 . . . Too late!  
 It has crawled up the walls — it has  
 burst in the gate —  
 It looks through the windows — it  
 creeps near the hall —  
 Near, more near — red and clear —  
 It is here!  
 Now the saints save us all!  
 And little, in truth, boots it ringing  
 the bell.  
 For the fire is loose on its way one  
 may tell  
 By the hot simmering whispers and  
 humming up there  
 In the oak-beams and rafters. Now  
 one of the Squires  
 His elbow hath thrust through the  
 half-smouldered door, —  
 Such a hole as some rat for his  
 brown wife might bore, —  
 And straightway in snaky, white  
 wavering spires  
 The thin smoke twirls through, and  
 spreads eddying in gyres  
 Here and there toucht with vanish-  
 ing tints from the glare  
 That has swathed in its rose-light  
 the sharp turret stair.  
 Soon the door ruined through: and  
 in tumbled a cloud  
 Of black vapor. And first 'twas all  
 blackness, and then  
 The quick forked fires leapt out  
 from their shroud  
 In the blackness: and through it  
 rushed in the armed men  
 From the court-yard. And then  
 there was flying and fighting,  
 And praying and cursing, — confu-  
 sion confounded.  
 Each man, at wild hazard, through  
 smoke ramparts smiting,  
 Has struck . . . is it friend? is it  
 foe? Who is wounded?  
 But the Earl, — who last saw him?  
 Who cares? who knows?

Some one, no doubt, by the weight  
 of his blows.  
 And they all, at times, heard his  
 oath — so they swore: —  
 Such a cry as some speared wild  
 beast might give vent to  
 When the lean dogs are on him, and  
 forth with that roar  
 Of desolate wrath, the life is sent  
 too.  
 If he die, he will die with the dying  
 about him,  
 And his red wet sword in his hand,  
 never doubt him:  
 If he live, perchance he will bear  
 his new bride  
 Through them all, past the bridge,  
 to the wild seaside.  
 And there, whether he leave, or  
 keep his wife still,  
 There's the free sea round him  
 new lands, and new life still.  
 And . . . but ah, the red light there!  
 And high up and higher  
 The soft, warm, vivid sparkles  
 crowd kindling, and wander  
 Far away down the breathless blue  
 cone of the night.  
 Saints! can it be that the ships are  
 on fire, [light,  
 Those fierce hot clots of crimson  
 Brightening, whitening in the dis-  
 tance yonder?  
 Slowly over the slumbrous dark  
 Up from those fountains of fire  
 spark on spark  
 (You might count them almost)  
 floats silent: and clear  
 In the steadfast glow the great  
 cross-beams,  
 And the sharp and delicate masts  
 show black;  
 While wider and higher the red  
 light streams,  
 And oozes and overflows at the back.  
 Thien faint through the distance a  
 sound you hear,  
 And the bare poles totter and disap-  
 pear.

Of the Earl, in truth, the Seneschal  
 swore  
 (And over the ocean this tale he  
 bore)  
 That when, as he fled on that last  
 wild night,  
 He had gained the other side of the  
 moat,  
 Dripping, he shook off his wet  
 leathern coat,  
 And turning round beheld, from  
 basement  
 To cope, the castle swathed in light,  
 And, revealed in the glare through  
 My Lady's casement,  
 He saw, or dreamed he saw, this  
 sight—

Two forms (and one for the Earl's he  
 knew,  
 By the long shaggy beard and the  
 broad back too)  
 Struggling, grappling, like things half  
 human.  
 The other, he said, he but vaguely  
 distinguished,  
 When a sound like the shriek of an  
 agonized woman  
 Made him shudder, and lo, all the  
 vision was gone !  
 Ceiling and floor had fallen through,  
 In a glut of vomited flame ex-  
 tinguished ;  
 And the still fire rose and broadened  
 on.  
 How fearful a thing is fire !  
 You might make up your mind to die  
 by water  
 A slow cool death,—nay, at times,  
 when weary  
 Of pains that pass not, and pleasures  
 that pall,  
 When the temples throb, and the  
 heart is dreary  
 And life is dried up, you could even  
 desire  
 Through the flat green weeds to fall  
 and fall  
 Half asleep down the green light  
 under them all,  
 As in a dream, while all things seem

Wavering, wavering, to feel the  
 stream  
 Wind, and gurgle, and sound and  
 gleam.  
 And who would very much fear to  
 expire  
 By steel, in the front of victorion  
 slaughter,  
 The blithe battle about him, an  
 comrades in call ?  
 But to die by fire—  
 O that night in the hall !

And the castle burned from base to  
 top.  
 You had thought that the fire would  
 never stop,  
 For it roared like the great north-  
 wind in the pines,  
 And shone as the boreal meteor  
 shines  
 Watched by wild hunters in shudder-  
 ing bands,  
 When wolves are about in the icy  
 lands.  
 From the sea you might mark for a  
 space of three days,  
 Or fainter or fiercer, the dull red  
 blaze.  
 And when this ceased, the smoke  
 above it  
 Hung so heavy not even the wind  
 seemed to move it ;  
 So it glared and groaned, and night  
 after night  
 Smouldered, — a terrible beacon-  
 light.

Now the Earl's old minstrel,— he  
 that had sung  
 His youth out in those halls,—the  
 man beloved, [tongue,  
 With the silver hair and the golden  
 They bore him out from the fire ; but  
 he roved  
 Back to the stifled courts ; and there  
 They watched him hovering, day  
 after day,  
 To and fro, with his long white hair  
 And his gold harp, chanting a lonely  
 lay :

<p>Chanting and changing it o'er and o'er, Like the mournful mad melodious breath Of some wild swan singing himself to death, As he floats down a strange land leagues away. One day the song ceased. They heard it no more.</p> <p>Did you ever an Alpine eagle see Come down from flying near the sun To find his eyrie all undone On lonely cliffs where chance hath led Some spying thief the brood to plunder? How hangs he desolate overhead, And circling now aloft, now under, His ruined home screams round and round, Then drops flat fluttering to the ground. So moaning round the roofs they saw him, With his gleaming harp and his vesture white: [ing Going, and coming, and ever return- To those chambers, emptied of beauty and state And choked with blackness and ruin and burning;</p>	<p>Then, as some instinct seemed to draw him, Like hidden hands down to his fate, He paused, plunged, dropped for- ever from sight; And a cone of smoke and sparkles rolled up, As out of some troubled crater-cup. As for the rest, some died; some fled Over the sea, nor ever returned. But until to the living return the dead, And they each shall stand and take their station Again at the last great conflagration, Nevermore will be seen the Earl or the stranger. No doubt there is much here that's fit to be burned. Christ save us all in that day from the danger! And this is why these fishermen say, Sitting alone in their boats on the bay, When the moon is low in the wild windy nights, They hear strange sounds, and see strange sights. Spectres gathering all forlorn Under the boughs of this bare black thorn.</p>
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## A SOUL'S LOSS.

"If Beauty have a soul this is not she."—TROIUS AND CRESSIDA.

<p>"TWIXT the Future and the Past There's a moment. It is o'er. Kiss sad hands! we part at last. I am on the other shore. Fly, stern Hour! and hasten fast. Nobler things are gone before. From the dark of dying years Grows a face with violet eyes, Tremulous through tender tears, —</p>	<p>Warm lips heavy with rich sighs, — Ah, they fade! it disappears, And with it my whole heart dies! Dies . . . and this choked world is sickening; Truth has nowhere room for breath. Crusts of falsehood, slowly thick- ening From the rottenness beneath</p>
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These rank social forms, are quick-  
ening  
To a loathsome life-in-death.

O those devil's market-places !  
Knowing, nightly, she wa there,  
Can I marvel that the traces  
On her spirit are not fair ?  
I forgot that air debases  
When I knew she breathed such  
air.

This a fair immortal spirit  
For which God prepared his  
spheres ?

What ! shall this the stars inherit ?  
And the worth of honest tears ?  
A fool's fancy all its mirth !  
A fool's judgment all its fears !

No, she loves no other ! No,  
That is lost which she gave me.  
Is this comfort,—that I know  
All her spirit's poverty ?  
When that dry soul is drained low,  
His who wills the dregs may be !

Peace ! I trust a heart forlorn  
Weakly upon boisterous speech.  
Pity were more fit than scorn.  
Fingered moth, and bloomless  
peach !

Gathered rose without a thorn,  
Set to flee in all men's reach !

I am clothed with her disgrace.  
O her shame has made my own !  
O I reel from my high place !  
All belief is overthrown.  
What ! This whirligig of lace,  
This is the Queen that I have  
known ?

Starry Queen that did confer  
Beauty on the barren earth !  
Woodlands, wandered oft with her  
In her sadness and her mirth,  
Feeling her ripe influence stir  
Brought the violets to birth.

The great golden clouds of even,  
They, too, knew her, and the  
host  
Of the eternal stars in heaven ;  
And I deemed I knew he most.  
I, to whom the Word was given  
How archangels have been lost !

Given in vain ! . . . But all is over.  
Every spell that bound me broken  
In her eyes I can discover  
Of that perisht soul no token.  
I can neither hate nor love her.  
All my loss must be unspoken.

Mourn I may, that from her features  
All the angel light is gone.  
But I chide not. Human creatures  
Are not angels. She was none.  
Women have so many natures !  
I think she loved me well with  
one.

All is not with love departed.  
Life remains, though toucht with  
scorn.  
Lonely, but not broken-hearted.  
Nature changes not. The morn  
Breathes not sadder. Buds have  
started  
To white clusters on the thorn.

And to-morow I shall see  
How the leaves their green leaves  
sheath  
Have burst upon the chestnut-tree.  
And the white rose-bush beneath  
My lattice which, once tending, she  
Made thrice sweeter with her  
breath,

Its black buds through moss and  
glue  
Will swell greener. And at eve  
Winking bats will waver through  
The gray warmth from eave to  
eave,  
While the daisy gathers dew.  
These things grieve not, though I  
grieve.

What of that? Deep Nature's glad-  
ness

Does not help this grief to less.  
And the stars will show no sadness,  
And the flowers no heaviness,  
Though each thought should turn to  
madness  
'Neath the strain of its distress!

No, if life seem lone to me,  
'Tis scarce lonelier that at first.  
Lonely natures there must be.  
Eagles are so. I was nurst  
Far from love in infancy:  
I have sought to slake my thirst

At high founts; to fly alone,  
Haunt the heaven, and soar, and  
sing.  
Earth's warm joys I have not  
known.

This one heart held everything.  
Now my eyrie is o'erthrown!  
As of old, I spread the wing,

And rise up to meet my fate  
With a yet unbroken will.  
When Heaven shut up Eden-gate,  
Man was given the earth to till.  
There's a world to cultivate,  
And a solitude to fill.

Welcome man's old helpmate, Toil!  
How may this heart's hurt be  
healed?

Crush the olive into oil;  
Turn the ploughshare; sow the  
field.

All are tillers of the soil.  
Each some harvest hopes to yield.

Shall I perish with the whole  
Of the coming years in view  
Unattempted? To the soul  
Every hour brings something new.  
Still suns rise: still ages roll.  
Still some deed is left to do.

Some . . . but what? Small matter  
now!  
For one lily for her hair,

For one rose to wreath her brow,  
For one gem to sparkle there,  
I had . . . words, old words, I know!  
What was I, that she should care

How I differed from the common  
Crowd that thrills not to her  
touch?

How I deemed her more than  
human,  
And had died to crown her such?  
They? To them she is mere  
woman.  
O, her loss and mine is much!

Fool, she haunts me still! No  
wonder!

Not a bud on yon black bed,  
Not a swated lily yonder,  
But recalls some fragrance fled!  
Here, what marvel I should ponder  
On the last word which she said?

I must seek some other place  
Where free Nature knows her not:  
Where I shall not meet her face  
In each old familiar spot.  
There is comfort left in space.  
Even this grief may be forgot.

Great men reach dead hands unto  
me  
From the graves to comfort me.  
Shakspeare's heart is throbbing  
through me.

All man has been man may be.  
Plato speaks like one that knew  
me.  
Life is made Philosophy.

Ah, no, no! while yet the leaf  
Turns, the truth upon its pall.  
By the stature of this grief,  
Even Shakspeare shows so small!  
Plato palters with relief.  
Grief is greater than them all!

They were pedants who could speak  
Grander souls have passed un-  
heard:

Such as found all language weak ;  
 Choosing rather to record  
 Secrets before Heaven : nor break  
 Faith with angels by a word.

And Heaven heeds this wretched-  
 ness

Which I suffer. Let it be.

Would that I could love thee less !  
 I, too, am dragged down by thee.

Thine—in weakness—thine—ah yes!  
 Yet farewell eternally.

Child, I have no lips to chide thee.  
 Take the blessing of a heart  
 (Never more to beat beside thee !)  
 Which in blessing breaks. De-  
 part.

Farewell. I that deified thee  
 Dare not question what thou art.

## THE ARTIST.

O ARTIST, range not over-wide :  
 Lest what thou seek be haply hid  
 In bramble-blossoms at thy side,  
 Or shut within the daisy-lid.

God's glory lies not out of reach.  
 The moss we crush beneath our  
 feet,  
 The pebbles on the wet sea-beach,  
 Have solemn meanings strange and  
 sweet.

The peasant at his cottage door  
 May teach thee more than Plato  
 knew :  
 See that thou scorn him not : adore  
 God in him, and thy nature too.

Know well thy friends. The wood-  
 bine's breath,  
 The woolly tendril on the vine,  
 Are more to thee than Cato's death,  
 Or Cicero's words to Catiline.

The wild rose is thy next in blood :  
 Share Nature with her, and thy  
 heart.

The kingcups are thy sisterhood :  
 Consult them duly on thine art.

Nor cross the sea for gems. Nor  
 seek :

Be sought. Fear not to dwell  
 alone.

Possess thyself. Be proudly meek.  
 See thou be worthy to be known.

The Genius on thy daily ways  
 Shall meet, and take thee by the  
 hand :

But serve him not as who obeys :  
 He is thy slave if thou command :

And blossoms on the blackberry-  
 stalks  
 He shall enchant as thou dost pass,  
 Till they drop gold upon thy walks,  
 And diamonds in the dewy grass.

Such largess of the liberal bowers  
 From left to right is grandly flung,  
 What time their subject blooms and  
 flowers  
 King-Poets walk in state among.

Be quiet. Take things as they come ;  
 Each hour will draw out some sur-  
 prise.

With blessing let the days go home .  
 Thou shalt have thanks from even-  
 ing skies.

Lean not on one mind constantly :  
 Lest, where one stood before, two  
 fall.

Something God hath to say to thee  
 Worth hearing from the lips of all

All things are thine estate : yet must  
 Thou first display the title-deeds,  
 And sue the world. Be strong : and  
 trust  
 High instincts more than all the  
 creeds.

The world of Thought is packed so  
 tight,  
 If thou stand up another tumbles :  
 Heed it not, though thou have to  
 fight  
 With giants ; whoso follows  
 stumbles.

Assert thyself : and by and by  
 The world will come and lean on  
 thee.  
 But seek not praise of men : thereby  
 Shall false shows cheat thee.  
 Boldly be.

Each man was worthy at the first :  
 God spake to us ere we were born :  
 But we forget. The land is curst :  
 We plant the brier, reap the thorn.

Remember, every man He made  
 Is different : has some deed to do,  
 Some work to work. Be undis-  
 mayed,  
 Though thine be humble : do it  
 too.

Not all the wisdom of the schools  
 Is wise for thee. Hast thou to  
 speak ?  
 No man hath spoken for thee. Rules  
 Are well : but never fear to break

The scaffolding of other souls :  
 It was not meant for thee to mount ;  
 Though it may serve thee. Separate  
 wholes  
 Make up the sum of God's account.

Earth's number-scale is near us set ;  
 The total God alone can see ;  
 But each some fraction shall I fret  
 If you see Four where I saw  
 Three ?

A unit's loss the sum would mar ;  
 Therefore if I have One or Two,  
 I am as rich as others are,  
 And help the whole as well as you.

This wild white rosebud in my hand  
 Hath meanings meant for me  
 alone,  
 Which no one else can understand :  
 To you it breathe with altered  
 tone :

How shall I class its properties  
 For you ? or its wise whisperings  
 Interpret ? Other ears and eyes  
 It teaches many other things.

We number daisies, fringe and star :  
 We count the cinquefoils and the  
 poppies :  
 We know not what they mean. We  
 are  
 Degenerate copyists of copies.

We go to Nature, not as lords,  
 But servants : and she treats us  
 thus :  
 Speaks to us with indifferent words,  
 And from a distance looks at us.

Let us go boldly, as we ought,  
 And say to her, " We are a part  
 Of that supreme original Thought  
 Which did conceive thee what thou  
 art :

" We will not have this lofty look :  
 Thou shalt fall down, and recog-  
 nize  
 Thy kings : we will write in thy  
 book,  
 Command thee with our eyes."

She hath usurpt us. She should be  
 Our model ; but we have become  
 Her miniature-painters. So when  
 we  
 Entreat her softly she is dumb.

Nor serve the subject overmuch :  
 Nor rhythm and rhyme, nor color  
 and form.

Know truth hath all great graces,  
 such  
 As shall with these thy work in-  
 form.

We ransack History's tattered page:  
 We prate of epoch and costume:  
 Call this, and that, the Classic Age:  
 Choose tunic now, now helm and  
 plume:

But while we halt in weak debate  
 'Twixt that and this appropriate  
 theme,  
 The offended wild-flowers stare and  
 wait,  
 The bird hoots at us from the  
 stream.

Next, as to laws. What's beautiful  
 We recognize in form and face:  
 And judge it thus, and thus, by rule,  
 As perfect law brings perfect grace:

If through the effect we drag the  
 cause,  
 Dissect, divide, anatomize,  
 Results are lost in loathsome laws,  
 And all the ancient beauty dies:

Till we, instead of bloom and light,  
 See only sinews, nerves, and veins:  
 Nor will the effect and cause unite,  
 For one is lost if one remains:

But from some higher point behold  
 This dense, perplexing complica-  
 tion;  
 And laws involved in laws unfold.  
 And orb into thy contemplation.

God, when he made the seed, con-  
 ceived  
 The flower; and all the work of  
 sun  
 And rain, before the stem was leaved,  
 In that prenatal thought was done;

The girl who twines in her soft hair  
 The orange-flower, with love's  
 devotion,

By the mere act of being fair  
 Sets countless laws of life in mo-  
 tion;

So thou, by one thought thoroughly  
 great,  
 Shalt, without heed thereto, fulfil  
 All laws of art. Create! create!  
 Dissection leaves the dead dea  
 still.

All Sciences are branches, each,  
 Of that first science,—Wisdom-  
 Seize  
 The true point whence, if thou  
 shouldst reach  
 Thine arm out, thou may'st grasp  
 all these,

And close all knowledge in thy palm.  
 As History proves Philosophy:  
 Philosophy, with warnings calm,  
 Prophet-like, guiding History.

Burn catalogues. Write thine own  
 books.  
 What need to pore o'er Greece and  
 Rome?  
 When whoso through his own life  
 looks  
 Shall find that he is fully come.

Through Greece and Rome, and  
 Middle-Age:  
 Hath been by turns, ere yet full-  
 grown,  
 Soldier, and Senator, and Sage,  
 And worn the tunic and the gown.

Cut the world thoroughly to the  
 heart.  
 The sweet and bitter kernel crack.  
 Have no half-dealings with thine art.  
 All heaven is waiting: turn not  
 back.

If all the world for thee and me  
 One solitary shape possessed,  
 What shall I say? a single tree—  
 Whereby to type and hint the rest

And I could imitate the bark  
 And foliage, both in form and hue,  
 Or silvery-gray, or brown and dark,  
 Or rough with moss, or wet with  
 dew,

But thou, with one form in thine  
 eye,  
 Couldst penetrate all forms :  
 possess  
 The soul of form : and multiply  
 A million like it, more or less,—

Which were the Artist of us twain ?  
 The moral's clear to understand.  
 Where'er we walk, by hill or plain,  
 Is there no mystery on the land ?

The osiered, oozy water, ruffled  
 By fluttering swifts that dip and  
 wink :  
 Deep cattle in the cowslips muffled,  
 Or lazy-eyed upon the brink :

Or, when—a scroll of stars—the  
 night [away,  
 (By God withdrawn) is rolled  
 The silent sun, on some cold height,  
 Breaking the great seal of the day:

Are these not words more rich than  
 ours ?  
 O seize their import if you can !  
 Our souls are parched like withering  
 flowers, [gan.  
 Our knowledge ends where it be-

While yet about us fall God's dews,  
 And whisper secrets o'er the earth  
 Worth all the weary years we lose  
 In learning legends of our birth,

Arise, O Artist ! and restore  
 Their music to the moaning winds,  
 Love's broken pearls to life's bare  
 shore,  
 And freshness to our fainting  
 minds.

## THE WIFE'S TRAGEDY.

### I.

#### THE EVENING BEFORE THE FLIGHT.

TAKE the diamonds from my hair !  
 Take the flowers from the urn !  
 Fling the lattice wide ! more air !  
 Air—more air, or else I burn !

Put the bracelets by. And thrust  
 Out of sight these hated pearls.  
 I could trample them to dust,  
 Though they were his gift, the  
 Earl's !

Flusht I am ? The dance it was.  
 Only that. Now leave me, Sweet.  
 Take the flowers, Love, because  
 They will wither in this heat.

Good-night, dearest ! Leave the  
 door  
 Half-way open as you go.  
 —O, thank God ? . . . Alone once  
 more.  
 Am I dreaming ? . . . Dream-  
 ing ? . . . no !

Still that music underneath  
 Works to madness in my brain.  
 Even the roses seem to breathe  
 Poisoned perfumes, full of pain.

Let me think . . . my head is ach-  
 ing.  
 I have little strength to think.  
 And I know my heart is breaking.  
 Yet, O love, I will not shrink !

In his look was such sweet sadness.  
And he fixed that look on me.  
I was helpless . . . call it madness,  
Call it guilt . . . but it must be.

I can bear it, if, in losing  
All things else, I lose him not.  
All the grief is my own choosing.  
Can I murmur at my lot ?

Ah, the night is bright and still  
Over all the fields I know  
And the chestnuts on the hill :  
And the quiet lake below.

By that lake I yet remember  
How, last year, we stood together  
One wild eye in warm September  
Bright with thunder : not a feather

Stirred the slumbrous swans that  
floated  
Past the reed-beds, husht and  
white :

Towers of sultry cloud hung moated  
In the lake's unshaken light :

Far behind us all the extensive  
Woodland blackened against heav-  
en : [sive :  
And we spoke not :—pausing pen-  
Till the thunder-cloud was riven,

And the black wood whitened under,  
And the storm began to roll,  
And the love laid up like thunder  
Burst at once upon my soul.

There ! . . . the moon is just in  
crescent  
In the silent happy sky.  
And to-night the meanest peasant  
In her light's more blest than I.

Other moons I soon shall see  
Over Asian headlands green :  
Ocean-spaces sparkling free  
Isles of breathless balm between.

And the rosy-rising star  
At the setting of the day  
From the distant sandy bar  
Shining over Africa :

Steering through the glowing wea-  
ther  
Past the tracks of crimson light,  
Down the sunset lost together  
Far athwart the summer night.

“Canst thou make such life thy  
choice,  
My heart's own, my chosen one ?”  
So he whispered and his voice  
Had such magic in its tone ?

But one hour ago we parted.  
And we meet again to-morrow.  
Parted—silent, and sad-hearted :  
And we meet—in guilt and sor-  
row.

But we *shall* meet . . . meet, O God,  
To part never . . . the last time !  
Yes ! the Ordeal shall be trod.  
Burning ploughshares — love and  
crime.

O with him, with him to wander  
Through the wide world—only  
his !  
Heart and hope and heaven to  
squander  
On the wild wealth of his kiss !

Then ? . . . like these poor flowers  
that wither  
In my bosom, to be thrown  
Lightly from him any whither  
When the sweetness all is flown ?

O, I know it all, my fate !  
But the gulf is crost forever.  
And regret is born too late.  
The shut Past reopens never.

Fear ? . . . I cannot fear ! for fear  
Dies with hope in every breast.  
O, I see the frozen sneer.  
Careless smile, and callous jest !

But my shame shall yet be worn  
Like the purple of a Queen.  
I can answer scorn with scorn.  
Fool ! I know not what I me

Yet beneath his smile (*his smile!*)  
Smiles less kind I shall not see.  
Let the whole wide world revile.  
He is all the world to me.

So to-night all hopes, all fears,  
All the bright and brief array  
Of my lost youth's happier years,  
With these gems I put away.

Gone! . . . so . . . one by one  
all gone!  
Not one jewel I retain.  
Of my life's wealth. All alone  
I tread boldly o'er my pain.

On to him . . . Ah, me! my child—  
My own fair-haired, darling boy!  
In his sleep just now he smiled.  
All his dreams are dreams of joy.

How those soft long lashes shade  
That young cheek so husht and  
warm,  
Like a half-blown rosebud laid  
On the little dimpled arm!

He will wake without a mother.  
He will hate me when he hears  
From the cold lips of another  
All my faults in after years.

None will toll the deep devotion  
Wherewith I have brooded o'er  
His young life, since its first motion  
Made me hope and pray once  
more.

On my breast he smiled and slept,  
Smiled between my wrongs and  
me,

Till the weak warm tears I wept  
Set my dry, coiled nature free.

Nay, . . . my feverish kiss would  
wake him.

How can I dare bless his sleep?  
They will change him soon, and  
make him

Like themselves that never weep;

Fitted to the world's bad part:  
Yet, with all their wealth afford  
him

Aught more rich than this lost  
heart

Whose last anguish yearns toward  
him?

Ah, there's none will love him then  
As I love that leave him now!  
He will mix with selfish men.  
Yes, he has his father's brow!

Lie thou there, thou poor rose-  
blossom,

In that little hand more light  
Than upon this restless bosom,  
Whose last gift is given to-night.

God forgive me!—My God, cherish  
His lone motherless infancy!  
Would to-night that I might perish!  
But heaven will not let me die.

O love! love! but this is bitter!  
O that we had never met!  
O but hate than love were fitter!  
And he too may hate me yet.

Yet to him have I not given  
All life's sweetness? . . . fame?  
and name?  
Hope? and happiness? and heaven?  
Can he hate me for my shame?

"Child," he said, "thy life was  
glad  
In the dawning of its years;  
And love's morn should be less sad  
For his eve may close in tears.

"Sweet in novel lands," he said,  
"Day by day to share delight;  
On by soft surprises led,  
And together rest at night.

"We will see the shores of Greece  
And the temples of the Nile:  
Sail where summer suns increase  
Toward the south from isle to isle



"Track the first star that swims on  
Glowing depths toward night and  
us,

While the heats of sunset crimson  
All the purple Bosphorus.

"Leaning o'er some dark ship-side,  
Watch the wane of mighty moons;  
Or through starlit Venice glide,  
Singing down the blue lagoons.

"So from coast to coast we'll range,  
Growing nearer as we move  
On our charmed way: each soft  
change  
Only deepening changeless love."

'Twas the dream which I, too,  
dreamed

Once, long since, in days of yore.  
Life's long-faded fancies seemed  
At his words to bloom once more.

The old hope, the wreckt belief,  
The lost light of vanisht years,  
Ere my heart was worn with grief,  
Or my eyes were dimmed with  
tears!

When, a careless girl, I clung  
With proud trust to my own pow-  
er's;

Ah, long since I, too, was young,  
I, too, dreamed of happier hours!

Whether this may yet be so  
(Truth or dream) I cannot tell.  
But where'er his footsteps go  
Turns my heart, I feel too well.

Ha! the long night wears away.  
Yon cold drowsy star grows dim.  
The long-feared, long-wisht-for day  
Comes, when I shall fly with him.

In the laurel wakes the thrush.  
Through these dreaming chambers  
wide

Not a sound is stirring. Hush;  
—O it was my child that cried!

## II.

## THE PORTRAIT.

YES, 'tis she! Those eyes! that  
hair

With the self-same wondrous hue!  
And that smile—which was so fair,  
Is it strange I deemed it true?

Years, years, years I have not drawn  
Back this curtain! there she  
stands

By the terrace on the lawn,  
With the white rose in her hands

And about her the armorial  
Scutcheons of a haughty race,  
Graven each with its memorial  
Of the old Lords of the Place.

You, who do profess to see  
In the face the written mind,  
Look in that face, and tell me  
In what part of it you find

All the falsehood, and the wrong,  
And the sin, which must have  
been

Hid in baleful beauty long,  
Like the worm that lurks unseen.

In the shut heart of the flower.  
'Tis the Sex, no doubt! And still  
Some may lack the means, the power,  
There's not one that lacks the will.

Their own way they seek the Devil,  
Ever prone to the deceiver!  
If too deep I feel this evil  
And this shame, may God forgive  
her!

For I loved her,—loved, ay, loved<sup>d</sup>  
her

As a man just once may love.  
I so trusted, so approved her,  
Set her, blindly, so above

This poor world which was about  
her!

And (so loving her) because,  
With a faith too high to doubt her,  
I, forsooth, but seldom was

At her feet with clamorous praises  
And protested tenderness  
(These things some men can do),  
phrases

On her face, perhaps her dress,

Or the flower she chose to braid  
In her hair,—because, you see,  
Thinking love's best proved unsaid,  
And by words the dignity

Of true feeling's often lost,  
I was vowed to life's broad duty ;  
Man's great business uppermost  
In my mind, not woman's beauty ;

Toiling still to win for her  
Honor, fortune, state in life.  
(" Too much with the Minister,  
And too little with the wife !")

Just for this, she flung aside  
All my toil, my heart, my name ;  
Trampled on my ancient pride,  
Turned my honor into shame.

O, if this old coronet  
Weighed too hard on her young  
brow,

Need she thus dishonor it,  
Fling it in the dust so low ?

But 'tis just these women's way,—  
All the same the wide world over !  
Fooled by what's most worthless,  
they  
Cheat in turn the honest lover.

And I was not, I thank heaven,  
Made, as some, to read them  
through ;  
Were life three times longer even,  
There are better things to do.

No ! to let a woman lie  
Like a canker, at the roots  
Of a man's life,—burn it dry,  
Nip the blossom, stunt the fruits,

This I count both shame and thrall !  
Who is free to let one creature  
Come between himself, and all  
The true process of his nature,

While across the world the nations  
Call to us that we should share  
In their griefs, their exultations ?—  
All they will be, all they are !

And so much yet to be done,—  
Wrong to root out, good to  
strengthen !  
Such hard battles to be won !  
Such long glories yet to lengthen !

'Mid all these, how small one grief,—  
One wrecked heart, whose hopes  
are o'er !  
For myself I scorn relief.  
For the people I claim more.

Strange ! these crowds whose in-  
stincts guide them  
Fail to get the thing they would,  
Till we nobles stand beside them,  
Give our names, or shed our blood.

From of old this hath been so.  
For we too were with the first  
In the fight fought long ago  
When the chain of Charles was  
burst.

Who but we set Freedom's border  
Wrenched at Runnymede from  
John ?  
Who but we stand, towers of order,  
'Twixt the red cap and the  
throne ?

And they wrong us, England's Peers,  
Us, the vanguard of the land,  
Who should say the march of years  
Makes us shrink at Truth's right  
hand.

'Mid the armies of Reform,  
To the People's cause allied,  
We—the forces of the storm !  
We—the planets of the tide !

Do I seem too much to fret  
At my own peculiar woe ?  
Would to heaven I could forget  
How I loved her long ago !

As a father loves a child,  
So I loved her :—rather thus  
Than as youth loves, when our wild  
New-found passions master us.

And—for I was proud of old  
(’Tis my nature)—doubtless she  
In the man so calm, so cold,  
All the heart’s warmth could not  
see.

Nay, I blame myself—nor lightly,  
Whose chief duty was to guide  
Her young careless life more rightly  
Through the perils at her side.

Ah, but love is blind ! and I  
Loved her blindly, blindly ! . . .  
Well,  
Who that ere loved trustfully  
Such strange danger could fore-  
tell ?

As some consecrated cup  
On its saintly shrine secure,  
All my life seemed lifted up  
On that heart I deemed so pure.

Well, for me there yet remains  
Labor—that’s much : then, the  
state :  
And, what rays a thousand pains,  
Sense of right and scorn of fate.

And, O, more ! . . . my own brave  
boy,  
With his frank and eager brow,  
And his hearty innocent joy.  
For as yet he does not know

All the wrong his mother did.  
Would that this might pass un-  
known !  
For his young years God forbid  
I should darken by my own.

Yet this must come . . . but I mean  
He shall be, as time moves on,  
all his mother might have been,  
Comfort, counsel—both in one.

Doubtless, first, in that which moved  
me

Man’s strong natural wrath had  
part.

Wronged by one I deemed had  
loved me,

For I loved her from my heart !

But that’s past ! If I was sore  
To the heart, and blind with  
shame,

I see calmly now. Nay, more,—  
For I pity where I blame.

For, if he betray or grieve her,  
What is her’s to turn to still ?  
And at last, when he shall leave  
her,  
As at last he surely will,

Where shall she find refuge ? what  
That worst widowhood can  
soothe ?

For the Past consoles her not,  
Nor the memories of her youth,

Neither that which in the dust  
She hath flung,—the name she  
bore ;

But with her own shame she must  
Dwell forsaken evermore.

Nothing left but years of anguish,  
And remorse but not return :  
Of her own self-hate to languish :  
For her long-lost peace to yearn :

Or, yet worse beyond all measure,  
Starting from wild reveries,  
Drain the poison misnamed Pleas-  
ure,  
And laugh drunken on the lees.

O false heart ! O woman, woman,  
Woman ! would thy treachery  
Had been less ! For surely no man  
Better loved than I loved thee.

We must never meet again.  
Even shouldst thou repent the  
past.

Both must suffer : both feel pain :  
Ere God pardon both at last.

Farewell, thou false face! Life  
 speeds me  
 On its duties. I must fight :  
 I must toil. The People needs me :  
 And I speak for them to-night.

## III.

## THE LAST INTERVIEW.

THANKS, Dear! Put the lamp  
 down . . . so,

For my eyes are weak and dim.  
 How the shadows come and go !  
 Speak truth,—have they sent for  
 him ?

Yes, thank Heaven ! And he will  
 come,  
 Come and watch my dying hour,—  
 Though I left and shamed his home.  
 —I am withered like this flower

Which he gave me long ago.  
 'Twas upon my bridal eve,  
 When I swore to love him so  
 As a wife should—smile or grieve

With him, for him—and not shrink.  
 And now ? . . . O the long, long  
 pain !  
 See this sunken cheek ! You think  
 He would know my face again ?

All its wretched beauty gone !  
 Only the deep care survives.  
 Ah, could years of grief atone  
 For those fatal hours ! . . . It  
 drives

Past the pane, the bitter blast !  
 In this garret one might freeze.  
 Hark there ! wheels below ! At last  
 He is come then ? No . . . the  
 trees

And the night-wind—nothing more !  
 Set the chair for him to sit,  
 When he comes. And close the  
 door,  
 For the gust blows cold through it.

When I think, I can remember  
 I was born in castle-halls,—  
 How you dull and dying ember  
 Glares against the whitewacht  
 walls !

If he come not (but you said  
 That the messenger was sent  
 Long since ?) Tell him when I'm  
 dead  
 How my life's last hours were  
 spent

In repenting that life's sin.  
 And . . . the room grows strangely  
 dark !

See, the rain is oozing in.  
 Set the lamp down nearer. Hark,

Footsteps, footsteps on the stairs !  
 His . . . no, no ! 'twas *not* the  
 wind.

God, I know, has heard my prayers.  
 We shall meet. I am resigned.

Prop me up upon the pillows.  
 Will he come to my bedside ?  
 Once 'twas his . . . Among the  
 willows  
 How the water seems to glide !

Past the woods, the farms, the tow  
 ers,  
 It seems gliding, gliding through.  
 "Dearest, see, these young June  
 flowers,  
 I have pluckt them ail for you,

"Here, where passed my boyhood  
 musing  
 On the bride which I might wed."  
 Ah, it goes now ! I am losing  
 All things. What was that he  
 said ?

Say, where am I ? . . . This strange  
 room ?

THE EARL.

Gertrude !

GERTRUDE.

Ah, his voice! I knew it.

But this place? . . . Is this the tomb,

With the cold dews creeping through it?

THE EARL.

Gertrude! Gertrude!

GERTRUDE.

Will you stand

Near me? Sit down. Do not stir.

Tell me, may I take your hand?

Tell me, will you look on her

Who so wronged you? I have wept  
O such tears for that sin's sake!  
And that thought has never slept,—  
But it lies here, like a snake,

In my bosom, — gnawing, gnawing  
All my life up! I had meant,  
Could I live yet . . . Death is drawing  
Near me—

THE EARL.

God, thy punishment!

Dare I judge her?—

GERTRUDE.

O, believe me,

'Twas a dream, a hideous dream.

And I wake now. Do not leave me.

I am dying. All things seem

Failing from me—even my breath!  
But my sentence is from old.

Sin came first upon me. Death  
Follows sin, soon, soon! Behold,

Dying thus! Ah, why didst leave  
Lonely Love's lost bridal bowers  
Where I found the snake, like Eve,  
Unsuspected 'mid the flowers?

Had I been some poor man's bride,  
I had shared with love his lot:

Labored truly by his side,  
And made glad his lowly cot.

I had been content to mate  
Love with labor's sunburnt brows  
But to be a thing of state,—  
Homeless in a husband's house!

In the gorgeous game—the strife  
For the dazzling prize—that moved  
you—

Love seemed crowded out of life—

THE EARL.

Ah fool! and I loved you, loved  
you!

GERTRUDE.

Yes. I see it all at last—  
All in ruins. I can dare  
To gaze down o'er my lost past  
From these heights of my despair.

O, when all seemed grown most  
drear—

I was weak—I cannot tell—  
But the serpent in my ear  
Whispered, whispered—and I fell.

Look around now. Does it cheer  
you,

This strange place? the wasted  
frame

Of the dying woman near you,  
Weighed into her grave by shame?

Can you trace in this wan form  
Aught resembling that young  
girl's

Whom you loved once? See, this  
arm—

Shrunken, shrunken! And my  
curls,

They have cut them all away.  
And my brows are worn with woe  
Would you, looking at me, say,  
She was lovely long ago?

Husband, answer! in all these  
Are you not avenged? If I

Could rise now, upon my knees,  
 At your feet, before I die,  
 I would fall down in my sorrow  
 And my shame, and say "for-  
 give,"  
 That which will be dust to-morrow,  
 This weak clay!

THE EARL.

Poor sufferer, live.  
 God forgives. Shall I not so?

GERTRUDE.

Nay, a better life, in truth,  
 I do hope for. Not below.  
 Partner of my perisht youth,  
 Husband, wronged one! Let your  
 blessing  
 Be with me, before, to-night,  
 From the life that's past redressing  
 This strayed soul must take its  
 flight!

Tears, warm tears! I feel them  
 creep  
 Down my cheek. Tears—not my  
 own.  
 It is long since I could weep.  
 Past all tears my grief hath grown.

Over this dry withered cheek,  
 Drop by drop, I feel them fall.  
 But my voice is growing weak:  
 And I have not spoken all.

I had much to say. My son,  
 My lost child that never knew me!  
 Is he like me? One by one,  
 All his little ways come to me.

Is he grown? I fancy him!  
 How that childish face comes  
 back  
 O'er my memory sweet and dim!  
 And his long hair? Is it black?

Or as mine was once? His mother  
 Did he ever ask to see?  
 Has he grown to love another—  
 Some strange woman not like me?

Would he shudder to behold  
 This pale face and faded form  
 If he knew, in days of old,  
 How he slumbered on my arm?

How I nurst him? loved him?  
 missed him  
 All this long heartbroken time?  
 It is years since last I kissed him.  
 Does he hate me for my crime?

I had meant to send some token—  
 If, indeed, I dared to send it.  
 This old chain—the links are  
 broken—  
 Like my life—I could not mend it.

Husband, husband! I am dying,  
 Dying! Let me feel your kiss  
 On my brow where I am lying.  
 You are great enough for this!

And you'll lay me, when I'm gone,  
 — Not in those old sculptured  
 walls!

Let no name be carved—no stone—  
 No ancestral funerals!

In some little grave of grass  
 Anywhere, you'll let me lie:  
 Where the night-winds only pass,  
 Or the clouds go floating by;

Where my shame may be forgot;  
 And the story of my life  
 And my sin remembered not.  
 So forget the faithless wife;

Or if, haply, when I'm dead,  
 On some worthier happier breast  
 Than mine was, you lean your head,  
 Should one thought of me molest

Those calm hours, recall me only  
 As you see me,—worn with tears:  
 Dying desolate here; left lonely  
 By the overthrow of years.

May I, lay my arm, then, there?  
 Does it not seem strange to you,  
 This old hand among your hair?  
 And these wasted fingers too?

How the lamp wanes! All grows dark —

Dark and strange. Yet now there shined [hark!  
Something passed me . . . Husband,  
There are voices on the wind.

Are they come? and do they ask me  
For the songs we used to sing?  
Strange that memory thus should  
task me!

Listen —

*Birds are on the wing:*

*And thy Birthday Morn is rising.*

*May it ever rise as bright!*

*Wake not yet! The day's devising  
Fair new things for thy delight.*

*Wake not yet! Last night this  
flower*

*Near thy porch began to pout  
From its warm sheath: in an hour  
All the young leaves will be out.*

*Wake not yet! So dear thou art,  
love,*

*That I grudge these buds the bliss  
Each will bring to thy young heart,  
love,*

*I would claim all for my kiss.*

*Wake not yet!*

— There now, it fails me!

Is my lord there? I am ill.  
And I cannot tell what ails me.

Husband! Is he near me still?

O, this anguish seems to crush  
All my life up,— body and mind!

THE EARL.

Gertrude! Gertrude! Gertrude!

GERTRUDE.

Hush!

There are voices in the wind

THE EARL.

Still she wanders! Ah, the pluck-  
ing

At the sheet!

GERTRUDE.

Hist! do not take it

From my bosom. See, 'tis sucking!  
If it sleep we must not wake it.

Such a little rosy mouth!  
— Not to-night, O not to-night!  
Did he tell me in the South [bright?  
That those stars were twice as

Off! away! unhand me — go!  
I forgive thee my lost heaven,  
And the wrong which thou didst do.  
Would my sin, too, were forgiven!

Gone at last! . . . Ah, fancy feigns  
These wild visions! I grow weak.  
Fast, fast dying! Life's warmth  
waned

From me. Is the fire out?

THE EARL.

Speak,  
Gertrude, speak! My wife, my  
wife!

Nay she is not dead, — not dead!  
See, the lips move. There is life.  
She is choking. Lift her head.

GERTRUDE.

Death! . . . My eyes grow dim, and  
dimmer.

I can scarcely see thy face.  
But the twilight seems to glimmer,  
Lighted from some distant place.  
Husband!

THE EARL.

. Gertrude!

GERTRUDE.

Art thou near me?  
On thy breast — once more — thy  
breast! [me,  
I have sinned — and — nay, yet hear  
And repented — and —

THE EARL.

The rest  
God hath heard, where now thou art,  
Thou poor soul, — in Heaven.

The door —

Close it softly, and depart.  
Leave us!

She is mine once more

## MINOR POEMS.

THE PARTING OF LAUNCELOT  
AND GUENEVERE.

## A FRAGMENT.

Now, as the time wore by to Our  
Lady's Day,  
Spring lingered in the chambers of  
the South.

The nightingales were far in fairy  
lands

Beyond the sunset : but the wet blue  
woods

Were half aware of violets in the  
wake

Of morning rains. The swallow still  
delayed

To build and be about in noisy  
roofs,

And March was moaning in the  
windy elm.

But Arthur's royal purpose held to  
keep

A joust of arms to solemnize the  
time

In stately Camelot. So the King sent  
forth

His heralds, and let cry through all  
the land

That he himself would take the lists,  
and tilt

Against all comers.

Hither came the chiefs  
Of Christendom. The King of North-  
galies ;

Anguishe, the King of Ireland ; the  
Haut Prince,

Sir Galahault ; the King o' the  
Hundred knights ;

The Kings of Scotland and of Brit-  
tany ;

And many more renownéd knights  
whereof

The names are glorious. Also all  
the earls,

And all the dukes, and all the mighty  
men

And famous heroes of the Table  
Round,

From far Northumberland to where  
the wave

Rides rough on Devon from the  
outer main.

So that there was not seen for seven  
years,

Since when, at Whitsuntide, Sir  
Galahad [court,

Departed out of Carlyel from the  
So fair a fellowship of goodly

knights.

Then would King Arthur that the  
Queen should ride

With him from Carlyel to Camelot  
To see the jousts. But she, because

that yet

The sickness was upon her, answered  
nay.

Then said King Arthur, " This re-  
penteth me.

For never hath been seen for seven  
years, [tide,

No, not since Galahad at Whitsun-  
Departed from us out of Carlyel,

So fair a fellowship of goodly  
knights."

But the Queen would not, and the  
king in wrath,

Brake up the court, and rode to As-  
tolat

On this side Camelot.

Now men said the Queen  
'Tarried behind because of Launce-  
lot,

For Launcelot stayed to heal him of  
his wound.



And there had been estrangement  
'twixt these two  
I' the later time, because of bitter  
words.

So when the king with all his fellow-  
ship  
Was ridden out of Carlyel, the Queen  
Arose, and called to her Sir Launce-  
lot.

Then to Sir Launcelot spoke Queen  
Guenevere.

“Not for the memory of that love  
whereof

No more than memory lives, but,  
Sir, for that

Which even when love is ended yet  
endures

Making immortal life with deathless  
deeds,

Honor — true knighthood's golden  
spurs, the crown

And priceless diadem of peerless  
Queens,—

I make appeal to you, that hear per-  
chance

The last appeal which I shall ever  
make.

So weigh my words not lightly! for  
I feel

The fluttering fires of life grow faint  
and col.l

About my heart. And oft, indeed,  
to me

Lying whole hours awake in the  
dead nights

The end seems near, as though the  
darkness knew

The angel waiting there to call my  
soul

Perchance before the house awakes ;  
and oft

When faint, and all at once, from  
far away,

The mournful midnight bells begin  
to sound

Across the river, all the days that  
were

(Brief, evil days!) return upon my  
heart,

And, where the sweetness seemed, I  
see the sin.

For, waking lone, long hours before  
the dawn,

Beyond the borders of the dark I  
seem

To see the twilight of another world,  
That grows and grows and glimmers  
on my gaze.

And oft, when late, before the lan-  
guorous moon

Through yonder windows to the  
West goes down

Among the pines, deep peace upon  
me falls,

Deep peace like death, so that I  
think I know

The blessed Mary and the righteous  
saints

Stand at the throne and intercede  
for me.

Wherefore these things are thus I  
cannot tell.

But now I pray you of your fealty,  
And by all knightly faith which may  
be left,

Arise and get you hence, and join  
the King.

For wherefore hold you thus behind  
the court,

Seeing my liege the King is moved  
in wrath?

For wete you well what say your  
foes and mine.

“See how Sir Launcelot and Queen  
Guenevere

Do hold them ever thus behind the  
King

That they may take their pleasure!  
Knowing not

How that for me all these delights  
are come

To be as withered violets.”

Half in tears  
She ceased abrupt. Given up to the  
proud grief,

Vexed to be vext. With love and  
anger moved.

Love toucht with scorn, and anger  
pierced with love.

About her, all unheeded, her long  
 hair  
 Loosed its warm, yellow, waving  
 loveliness,  
 And o'er her bare and shining shoul-  
 der cold  
 Fell floating free. Upon one full  
 white arm,  
 To which the amorous purple cover-  
 let  
 Clung dimpling close, her drooping  
 state was propt.  
 There, half in shadow of her soft  
 gold curls,  
 She leaned, and like a rose enrich  
 with dew,  
 Whose heart is heavy with the cling-  
 ing bee,  
 Bowed down toward him all her  
 glowing face,  
 While the light of her large angry  
 eyes  
 Uprose, and rose, a slow imperious  
 sorrow,  
 And o'er the shine of still, unquiver-  
 ing tears  
 Swam on to him.

But he, with brows averse  
 And orgolous looks, three times to  
 speech addressed,  
 Three times in vain. The silence of  
 the place  
 Fell like a hand upon his heart, and  
 hushed  
 His foolish anger with authority.  
 He would not see the wretched  
 Queen : he saw  
 Only the hunter on the arrassed  
 wall  
 Prepare to wind amort his bugle  
 horn,  
 And the long daylight dying down  
 the floors ;  
 For half-way through the golden  
 gates of eve  
 The sun was rolled. The dropping  
 tapestry glowed  
 With awful hues. Far off among  
 his reeds [light,  
 The river, smitten with a waning

Shone; and, behind black lengths of  
 pine revealed,  
 The red West smouldered, and the  
 day declined.  
 Then year by year, as wave on wave  
 a sea,  
 The tided Past came softly o'er his  
 heart,  
 And all the days which had been.

So he stood  
 Long in his mind divided: with him-  
 self  
 At strife: and, like a steed that hotly  
 chafes  
 His silver bit, which yet some silken  
 rein  
 Swayed by a skilled accustomed  
 hand restrains,  
 His heart against the knowledge of  
 its love  
 Made vain revolt, and fretful rose and  
 sunk.  
 But at the last, quelling a wayward  
 grief,  
 That swelled against all utterance,  
 and sought  
 To force its salt and sorrowful over-  
 flow  
 Upon weak language, "Now in-  
 deed," he cried,  
 "I see the face of the old time is  
 changed,  
 And all things altered! Will the  
 sun still burn?  
 Will the eternal stars? For  
 love was deemed  
 Not less secure than these. Needs  
 should there be  
 Something remarkable to prove the  
 world  
 I am no more that Launcelot, nor  
 thou  
 That Guenever, of whom, long  
 since, the fame,  
 Fruitful of noble deeds, with such a  
 light  
 Did fill this nook and cantle of the  
 earth,  
 That all great lands of Christendom  
 beside

Showed darkened of their glory. But  
 I see  
 That there is nothing left for men to  
 swear by.  
 For then thy will did never urge me  
 hence,  
 But drew me through all dangers to  
 thy feet.  
 And none can say, least thou, I have  
 not been [fame.  
 The staff and burgonet of thy fair  
 Nor mind you, Madam, how in Sur-  
 luse once,  
 When all the estates were met, and  
 noble judges,  
 Armed clean with shields, set round  
 to keep the right,  
 Before you sitting throned with  
 Galahault  
 In great array, on fair green quilts  
 of samite,  
 Rich, ancient, fringed with gold,  
 seven summer days,  
 And all before the Earls of North-  
 galies,  
 Such service then with this old  
 sword was wrought,  
 To crown thy beauty in the courts of  
 Fame,  
 That in that time fell many noble  
 knights,  
 And all men marvelled greatly? So  
 when last  
 The loud horns blew to lodging, and  
 we supped  
 With Palamedes and with Lamorak,  
 All those great dukes and kings, and  
 famous queens,  
 Beholding us with a deep joy,  
 avouched  
 Across the golden cups of costly  
 wine  
 'There is no Queen of love but  
 Guenevere.  
 And no true knight but Launcelot of  
 the Lake!'"

Thus he, transported by the thought  
 of days  
 And deeds that, like the mournful  
 martial sounds

Blown through sad towns where  
 some dead king goes by,  
 Made music in the chambers of his  
 heart,  
 Swept by the mighty memory of the  
 past.  
 Nor spake the sorrowful Queen, nor  
 from deep muse  
 Unbent the grieving beauty of her  
 brows,  
 But held her heart's proud pain  
 superbly still.

But when he lifted up his looks, it  
 seemed  
 Something of sadness in the ancient  
 place,  
 Like dying breath from lips beloved  
 of yore,  
 Or unforgotten touch of tender  
 hands  
 After long years, upon his spirit  
 fell.  
 For near the carven casement hung  
 the bird,  
 With hood and jess, that oft had led  
 them forth,  
 These lovers, through the heart of  
 rippling woods  
 At morning, in the old and pleasant  
 time.  
 And o'er the broidered canopies of  
 state  
 Blazed Uther's dragons, curious,  
 wrought with gems.  
 Then to his mind that dear and dis-  
 tant dawn  
 Came back, when first, a boy at  
 Arthur's court,  
 He paused abasht before the youth-  
 ful Queen.  
 And, feeling now her long imploring  
 gaze  
 Holding him in its sorrow, when he  
 marked  
 How changed her state, and all un-  
 like to her,  
 The most renownéd beauty of the  
 time,  
 And pearl of chivalry, for whom  
 himself

All on a summer's day broke, long  
of yore  
A hundred lances in the field, he  
sprang  
And caught her hand, and, falling to  
one knee,  
Arched all his haughty neck to a  
quick kiss.  
And there was silence. Silently the  
West  
Grew red and redder, and the day  
declined.

As o'er the hungering heart of some  
deep sea,  
That swells against the planets and  
the moon  
With sad continual strife and vain  
unrest,  
In silence rise and roll the laboring  
clouds  
That bind the thunder, o'er the  
heaving heart  
Of Guenevere all sorrows fraught  
with love,  
All stormy sorrows, in that silence  
passed.  
And like a star in that tumultuous  
night  
Love waxed and waned, and came  
and went, changed hue,  
And was and was not : till the cloud  
came down,  
And all her soul dissolved in show-  
ers : and love  
Rose through the broken storm ; and,  
with a cry  
Of passion sheathed in sharpest  
pain, she stretched  
Wide her warm arms : she rose, she  
reeled, and fell  
(All her great heart unqueened)  
upon the breast  
Of Launcelot ; and, lifting up her  
voice,  
She wept aloud, " Unhappy that I  
am,"  
She wept, " Unhappy ! Would that  
I had died  
Long since, long ere I loved thee,  
Launcelot !

Would I had died long since ! **ere** I  
had known  
This pain, which hath become my  
punishment,  
To have thirsted for the sea : to have  
received  
A drop no bigger than a drop of  
dew !  
I have done ill," she wept, " I am  
forlorn,  
Forlorn ! I falter where I stood  
secure :  
The tower I built is fall'n, is fall'n :  
the staff  
I leaned upon hath broken in my  
hand.  
And I, disrobed, dethroned, dis-  
crowned, and all undone,  
Survive my kingdom, widowed of  
all rule,  
And men shall mock me for a foolish  
Queen.  
For now I see thy love for me is  
dead,  
Dead that brief love which was the  
light of life,  
And all is dark : and I have lived too  
long.  
For how henceforth, unhappy, shall  
I bear  
To dwell among these halls where  
we have been ?  
How keep these chambers emptied  
of thy voice ?  
The walks where we have lingered  
long ago, [love,  
The gardens and the places of our  
Which shall recall the days that  
come no more,  
And all the joy which has been ?"  
Thus o'erthrown,  
And on the breast of Launcelot  
weeping wild—  
Weeping and murmuring — hung  
Queen Guenevere.  
But, while she wept, upon her brows  
and lips  
Warm kisses fell, warm kisses wet  
with tears.  
For all his mind was melted with re-  
morse,

**And** all his scorn was killed, and all  
 his heart  
 Gave way in that caress, and all the  
 love  
 Of happier years rolled down upon  
 his soul  
 Redoubled ; and he bowed his head,  
 and cried,  
 " Though thou be variable as the  
 waves,  
 More sharp than winds among the  
 Hebrides  
 That shut the frozen Spring in  
 stormy clouds,  
 As wayward as a child, and all un-  
 just,  
 Yet must I love thee in despite of  
 pain,  
 Thou peerless Queen of perfect love !  
 Thou star  
 That draw'st all tides ! Thou god-  
 dess far above  
 My heart's weak worship ! so adored  
 thou art,  
 And I so irretrievably all thine !  
 But now I will arise, as thou hast  
 said,  
 And join the King : and these thine  
 enemies  
 Shall know thee not defenceless any  
 more.  
 For, either, living, I yet hold my  
 life  
 To arm for thine, or, dying, by my  
 death  
 Will steep love's injured honor in  
 such blood  
 Shall wash out every stain ! And so  
 farewell, [far,  
 Beloved. Forget me not when I am  
 But in thy prayers and in thine even-  
 ing thoughts  
 Remember me : as I, when sundown  
 crowns  
 The distant hills, and Ave-Mary  
 rings,  
 Shall pine for thee on ways where  
 thou art not."

**So** these two lovers in one long em-  
 brace,

An agony of reconciliation, hung  
 Blinded in tears and kisses, lip to  
 lip,  
 And tranced from past and future,  
 time and space.

But by this time, the beam of the  
 slope day,  
 Edging blue mountain glooms with  
 sullen gold,  
 A dying fire, fell mournfully athwart  
 The purple chambers. In the courts  
 below  
 The shadow of the keep from wall to  
 wall  
 Shook his dark skirt : great chimes  
 began to sound,  
 And swing, and rock in glimmering  
 heights, and roll  
 A reeling music down : but ere it  
 fell  
 Faint bells in misty spires adown the  
 vale  
 Caught it, and bore it floating on to  
 night.

So from that long love-trance the  
 envious time  
 Reclaimed them. Then with a great  
 pang he rose  
 Like one that plucked his heart out  
 from his breast,  
 And, bitterly unwinding her white  
 arms  
 From the warm circle of their amor-  
 ous fold,  
 Left living on her lips the lingering  
 heat  
 Of one long kiss : and, gathering  
 strongly back  
 His poured-out anguish to his soul,  
 he went.

And the sun set.

Long while she sat alone,  
 Searching the silence with her fixed  
 eyes,  
 While far and farther off o'er dis-  
 tant floors  
 The intervals of brazen echoes fell.  
 A changeful light, from varying pas-  
 sions caught,

Flushed all her stately cheek from  
white to red  
In doubtful alternation, as some star  
Changes his fiery beauty : for her  
blood  
Set headlong to all wayward moods  
of sense,  
Stirred with swift ebb and flow : till  
suddenly all  
The frozen heights of grief fell  
loosed, fast, fast,  
In cataract over cataract, on her soul.  
Then at the last she rose, a reeling  
shape  
That like a shadow swayed against  
the wall,  
Her slight hand held upon her bosom,  
and fell  
Before the Virgin Mother on her  
knees.  
There, in a halo of the silver shrine,  
That touched and turned to starlight  
her slow tears,  
Below the feet of the pale-pictured  
saint  
She lay, poured out in prayer.

Meanwhile, without,  
A sighing rain from a low fringe of  
cloud  
Whispered among the melancholy  
hills.  
The night's dark limits widened : far  
above  
The crystal sky lay open : and the  
star  
Of eve, his rosy circlet trembling  
clear,  
Grew large and bright, and in the  
silver moats,  
Between the accumulated terraces,  
Tangled a trail of fire : and all was  
still.

#### A SUNSET FANCY

Just at sunset, I would be  
In some isle-garden, where the sea  
I look into shall seem more blue  
Than those dear and deep eyes do  
And, if anywhere the breeze  
Shall have stirred the cypress-trees,

Straight the yellow light falls  
through,  
Catching me, for once, at ease ;  
Just so much as may impinge  
Some tall lily with a tinge  
Of orange ; while, above the wall,  
Tumbles downward into view  
(With a sort of small surprise)  
One star more among them all,  
For me to watch with half-shut eyes.

Or else upon the breezy deck  
Of some felucca ; and one speck  
'Twixt the crimson and the yellow,  
Which may be a little fleck  
Of cloud, or gull with outstretch  
neck,

To Spezia bound from Cape Circello ;  
With a sea-song in my ears  
Of the bronzed buccaneers :  
While the night is waxing mellow,  
And the helmsman slackly steers,—  
Leaning, talking to his fellow,  
Who has oaths for all he hears,—  
Each thief swarthier than Othello.  
Or, in fault of better things,  
Close in sound of one who sings  
To casements, in a southern city ;  
Tinkling upon tender strings  
Some melodious old love-ditty ;  
While a laughing lady flings  
One rose to him, just for pity.  
But I have not any want  
Sweeter than to be with you,  
When the long light falleth slant,  
And heaven turns a darker blue ;  
And a deeper smile grows through  
The glance asleep 'neath those soft  
lashes,

Which the heart it steals into  
First inspires and then abashes.  
Just to hold your hand,—one touch  
So light you scarce should feel it  
such !

Just to watch you leaning o'er  
Those window-roses, love, . . . no  
more.

#### ASSOCIATIONS.

You know the place is just the same!  
The rocks build here : the sandy  
hill is

Ablaze with broom, as when she  
came  
Across the sea with her new name  
To dwell among the moated lilies.

The trifoly is on the walls :  
The daisies in the bowling-alley :  
The ox at eve lows from the stalls :  
At eve the cuckoo, floating, calls,  
When foxgloves tremble in the  
valley.

The iris blows from court to court :  
The bald white spider flits, or  
stays in

The chinks behind the dragonwort :  
That Triton still, at his old sport,  
Blows bubbles in his broken basin.

The terrace where she used to walk  
Still shines at noon between the  
roses :

The garden paths are blind with  
chalk :

The dragon-fly from stalk to stalk  
Swims sparkling blue till evening  
closes.

Then, just above that long dark  
copse,  
One warm red star comes out, and  
passes

Westward, and mounts, and mounts,  
and stops

(Or seems to) o'er the turret-tops,  
And lights those lonely casement-  
glasses.

Sir Ralph still wears that old grim  
smile.

The staircase creaks as up I  
clamber

To those still rooms, to muse awhile.  
I see the little meadow-stile

As I lean from the great south-  
chamber.

And Lady Ruth is just as white.  
(Ah, still, that face seems strangely  
like her !)

The lady and the wicked knight—

All just the same—she swooned for  
fright—  
And he—his arm still raised to  
strike her.

Her boudoir—no one enters there :  
The very flowers which last she  
gathered

Are in the vase ; the lute—the  
chair—

And all things—just as then they  
were !

Except the jasmins,—those are  
withered.

But when along the corridors  
The last red pause of day is stream-  
ing,

I seem to hear her up the floors :  
I seem to see her through the doors :

And then I know that I am dream-  
ing.

#### MEETING AGAIN.

YES ; I remember the white rose.  
And since then the young ivy  
has grown ;

From your window we could not  
reach it, and now it is over the  
stone.

We did not part as we meet, Dear.  
Well, Time hath his own stern  
cures !

And Alice's eyes are deeper, and  
her hair has grown like yours.

Is our greeting all so strange then ?  
But there's something here  
amiss,

When it is not well to speak kindly.  
And the olives are ripe by this.

I had not thought you so altered.  
But all is changed, God  
knows !

Good-night. It is night so soon  
now. Look there ! you have  
dropt your rose.

Nay, I have one that is withered and  
dearer to me. I came

To say good-night, little Alice. She  
does not remember my name.  
It is but the damp that is making  
my head and my heart ache  
so.

I never was strong in the old time,  
as the others were, you know.

And you'll sleep well, will you not,  
Darling? The old words  
sound so dear!

'Tis the last time I shall use them;  
you need show neither anger  
nor fear.

It is well that you look so cheerful.  
And is time so smooth with  
you?

How foolish I am! Good night,  
Dear. And bid Alice good  
night too.

#### ARISTOCRACY.

To thee be all men heroes: every  
race

Noble: all women virgins: and  
each place

A temple: know thou nothing that  
is base.

#### THE MERMAIDEN.

HE was a Prince with golden hair  
(In a palace beside the sea),  
And I but a poor Mermaid, —  
And how should he care for me?

Last summer I came, in the long  
blue nights,

To sit in the cool sea-caves:

Last summer he came to count the  
stars

From his terrace above the waves.

There's nothing so fair in the sea  
down there

As the light on his golden tresses:

There's nothing so sweet as his  
voice: ah, nothing

So warm as the warmth of his  
kisses'

I could not help but love him, love  
him,  
Till my love grew pain to me.  
And to-morrow he weds the Princess  
In that palace beside the sea.

#### AT HER CASEMENT.

I AM knee-deep in grass, in this  
warm June night,  
In the shade here, shut off from the  
great moonlight.

All alone, at her casement there,  
She sits in the light, and she combs  
her hair.

She shakes it over the carven seat,  
And combs it down to her stately  
feet.

And I watch her, hid in the blue  
June night,

Till my soul grows faint with the  
costly sight.

There's no flaw on that fair fine brow  
of hers,

As fair and as proud as Lucifer's.  
She looks in the glass as she turns  
her head:

She knows that the rose on her cheek  
is red:

She knows how her dark eyes shine,  
—their light

Would scarcely be dimmed though I  
died to-night.

I would that there in her chamber I  
stood,

Full-face to her terrible beauty! I  
would

I were laid on her queenly breast, at  
her lips,

With her warm hair wound through  
my finger-tips,

Draining her soul at one deep-drawn  
kiss

And I would be humbly content for  
this

To die, as is due, before the morn,  
Killed by her slowly returning  
scorn.



## A FAREWELL.

BE happy, child. The last wild  
words are spoken.

To-morrow, mine no more, the world  
will claim thee.

I blame thee not. But all my life is  
broken.

Of that brief Past I have no single  
token.

Never in years to come my lips shall  
name thee,

Never, child, never!

I will not say "Forget me"; nor  
those hours

Which were so sweet. Some scent  
dead leaves retain.

Keep all the flowers I gave thee —  
all the flowers

Dead, dead! Though years on years  
of life were ours, [again;

As we have met we shall not meet  
Forever, child, forever!

## AN EVENING IN TUSCANY.

Look! the sun sets. Now's the  
rarest

Hour of all the blessed day.

(Just the hour, love, you look  
fairest!)

Even the snails are out to play.

Cool the breeze mounts, like this  
Chianti

Which I drain down to the sun.

— There! shut up that old green  
Dante, —

Turn the page, where we begun,

At the last news of Ulysses, —

A grand image, fit to close

Just such grand gold eyes as this is,  
Full of splendor and repose!

So loop up those long bright  
tresses, —

Only, one or two must fall

Down your warm neck Evening  
kisses

Through the soft curls spite of all.

Ah, but rest in your still place  
there! [pleasure

Stir not — turn not! the warm  
Coming, going in your face there,  
And the rose (no richer treasure)

In your bosom, like my love there,  
Just half secret and half seen;  
And the soft light from above there  
Streaming o'er you where you  
lean,

With your fair head in the shadow  
Of that grass-hat's glancing brim.  
Like a daisy in a meadow  
Which its own deep fringes dim.

O you laugh, — you cry "What  
folly!"

Yet you'd scarcely have me wise,  
If I judge right, judging wholly  
By the secret in your eyes.

But look down now, o'er the city  
Sleeping soft among the hills, —  
Our dear Florence! That great Pitti  
With its steady shadow fills

Half the town up: its unwinking  
Cold white windows, as they  
glare [ing

Down the long streets, set one think-  
Of the old dukes who lived there;

And one pictures those strange men  
so! —

Subtle brains, and iron thews!  
There, the gardens of Lorenzo, —  
The long cypress avenues

Creep up slow the stately hillside  
Where the merry loungers are.  
But far more I love this still side, —  
The blue plain you see so far!

Where the shore of bright white  
villas  
Leaves off faint: the purple  
breadths

Of the olives and the willows:  
And the gold-rimmed mountain  
widths:

All transfused in slumbrous glory  
 To one burning point — the sun!  
 But up here, — slow, cold, and hoary  
 Reach the olives, one by one:

And the land looks fresh: the yellow  
 Arbutе-berries, here and there,  
 Growing slowly ripe and mellow  
 Through a flush of rosy hair.

For the Tramontana last week  
 Was about: 'tis scarce three  
 weeks [streak,  
 Since the snow lay, one white vast  
 Upon those old purple peaks.

So to-day among the grasses  
 One may pick up tens and twelves  
 Of young olives, as one passes,  
 Blown about, and by themselves

Blackening sullen-ripe. The corn  
 too  
 Grows each day from green to  
 golden.

The large-eyed wind-flowers forlorn  
 too  
 Blow among it, un beholden:

Some white, some crimson, others  
 Purple blackening to the heart.  
 From the deep wheat-sea, which  
 smothers  
 Their bright globes up, how they  
 start!

And the small wild pinks from ten-  
 der  
 Feather-grasses peep at us:  
 While above them burns, on slender  
 Stems, the red gladiolus:

And the grapes are green: this sea-  
 son  
 They'll be round and sound and  
 true,

If no after-blight should seize on  
 Those young bunches turning blue.

O that night of purple weather!  
 (Just before the moon had set)  
 You remember how together  
 We walked home? — the grass was  
 wet —

The long grass in the Poderé —  
 With the balmy dew among it:  
 And that nightingale — the fairy  
 Song he sung — O how he sung it!

And the fig-trees had grown heavy  
 With the young figs white and  
 woolly,  
 And the fire-flies, bevy on bevy  
 Of soft sparkles, pouring fully

Their warm life through trance on  
 trances  
 Of thick citron-shades behind,  
 Rose, like swarms of loving fancies  
 Through some rich and pensive  
 mind.

So we reached the loggia. Leaning  
 Faint, we sat there in the shade.  
 Neither spoke. The night's deep  
 meaning  
 Filled the silence up unsaid.

Hoarsely through the cypress alley  
 A civetta out of tune  
 Tried his voice by fits. The valley  
 Lay all dark below the moon.

Until into song you burst out, —  
 That old song I made for you  
 When we found our rose, — the first  
 out  
 Last sweet Springtime in the dew.

Well! . . . if things had gone less  
 wildly —  
 Had I settled down before  
 There, in England — labored mildly —  
 And been patient — and learned  
 more

Of how men should live in London —  
 Been less happy — or more wise —  
 Left no great works tried, and un-  
 done —  
 Never looked in your soft eyes —

I . . . but what's the use of think-  
 ing?  
 There! our nightingale begins —  
 Now a rising note — now sinking  
 Back in little broken rings

Of warm song that spread and eddy—  
 Now he picks up heart—and draws  
 His great music, slow and steady,  
 To a silver-centered pause!

## SONG.

THE purple iris hangs his head  
 On his lean stalk, and so declines :  
 The spider spills his silver thread  
 Between the bells of columbines :  
 An altered light in flickering eyes  
 Draws dews through these dim  
 eyes of ours :  
 Death walks in yonder waning  
 bowers,  
 And burns the blistering leaves.  
 Ah, well-a-day!  
 Blooms overblow :  
 Suns sink away :  
 Sweet things decay.

The drunken beetle, roused ere  
 night,  
 Breaks blundering from the rot-  
 ting rose,  
 Flits through blue spidery aconite,  
 And hums, and comes, and goes :  
 His thick, bewildered song receives  
 A drowsy sense of grief like ours :  
 He hums and hums among the  
 bowers,  
 And bangs about the leaves.  
 Ah, well-a-day!  
 Hearts overflow :  
 Joy flits away :  
 Sweet things decay.

Her yellow stars the jasmin drops  
 In mildewed mosses one by one :  
 The hollyhocks fall off their tops :  
 The lotus-blooms all white in  
 the sun :  
 The freckled foxglove faints and  
 grieves :  
 The smooth-paced slumbrous slug  
 devours  
 The gluey globes of gorgeous  
 flowers,  
 And smears the glistening leaves !  
 Ah, well-a-day !  
 Life leaves us so.

Love dare not stay.  
 Sweet things decay.

From brazen sunflowers, orb and  
 fringe,  
 The burning burnish dulls and  
 dies :  
 Sad Autumn sets a sullen tinge  
 Upon the scornful peonies :  
 The dewy frog limps out, and heaves  
 A speckled lump in speckled bow-  
 ers :  
 A reeking moisture, clings and  
 lowers  
 The lips of lapping leaves.  
 Ah, well-a-day!  
 Ere the cock crow,  
 Life's charmed array  
 Reels all away.

## SEASIDE SONGS.

## I.

DROP down below the orbéd sea,  
 O lingering light in glowing skies,  
 And bring my own true-love to me—  
 My dear true-love across the sea—  
 With tender-lighted eyes.

For now the gates of Night are flung  
 Wide open her dark coasts among :  
 And the happy stars crowd up,  
 and up,  
 Like bubbles that brighten, one  
 by one,  
 To the dark wet brim of some  
 glowing cup  
 Filled full to the parting sun.

And moment after moment grows  
 In grandeur up from deep to deep  
 Of darkness, till the night ha'h  
 clomb,  
 From star to star, heaven's  
 highest dome,  
 And, like a new thought born in  
 sleep,  
 The slumbrous glory glows, and  
 glows :  
 While, far below, a whisper goes  
 That heaves the happy sea :

For o'er faint tracts of fragrance  
wide,  
A rapture pouring up the tide —  
A freshness through the heat — a  
sweet,  
Uncertain sound, like fairy feet —  
The west-wind blows my love to  
me.

Love-laden from the lighted west  
Thou comest, with thy soul opprest  
For joy of him: all up the dim,  
Delicious sea blow fearlessly,  
Warm wind, that art the tenderest  
Or all that breathe from south or  
west,  
Blow whispers of him up the sea:  
Upon my cheek, and on my breast,  
And on the lips which he hath prest,  
Blow all his kisses back to me!

Far off, the dark green rocks about,  
All night shines, faint and fair,  
the far light:

Far off, the lone, late fishers shout  
From boat to boat i' the listening  
starlight:

Far off, and fair, the sea lies bare,  
Leagues, leagues beyond the reach  
of rowing:

Up creek and horn the smooth wave  
swells  
And falls asleep; or, inland flow-  
ing,

Twinkles among the silver shells,  
From sluice to sluice of shallow  
wells;

Or, down dark pools of purple  
glowing,  
Sets some forlorn star trembling  
there

In his own dim, dreamlike bril-  
liancy  
And I feel the dark sails grow-  
ing

Nearer, clearer, up the sea:  
And I catch the warm west  
blowing

All my own love's sighs to me:  
On the deck I hear them singing  
Songs they sing in my own land:..

Lights are swinging: bells are ring-  
ing:  
On the deck I see him stand!

## II.

The day is do<sup>wn</sup> into his bower:  
In languid lights his feet he steeps.  
The flusht sky darkens, low and  
lower,  
And closes on the glowing deeps.

In creeping curves of yellow foam  
Up shallow sands the waters slide:  
And warmly blow what whispers  
roam  
From isle to isle the lulled tide:

The boats are drawn: the nets drip  
bright:  
Dark casements gleam: old songs  
are sung:

And out upon the verge of night  
Green lights from lonely rocks  
are hung.

O winds of eve that somewhere  
rove  
Where darkest sleeps the distant  
sea,  
Seek out where haply dreams my  
love,  
And whisper all her dreams to  
me!

THE SUMMER-TIME THAT  
WAS.

THE swallow is not come yet;  
The river-banks are brown;  
The woodside walks are dumb yet,  
And dreary is the town.  
I miss a face from the window,  
A footstep from the grass;  
I miss the boyhood of my heart,  
And the summer-time that was.

How shall I read the books I read,  
Or meet the men I met?  
I thought to find her rose-tree dead,  
But it is growing yet.

And the river winds among the  
flags,  
And the leaf lies on the grass.  
But I walk alone. My hopes are  
gone,  
And the summer-time that was.

## ELAYNE LE BLANC.

O THAT sweet season on the April-  
verge  
Of womanhood ! When smiles are  
toucht with tears,  
And all the unsolaced summer  
seems to grieve  
With some blind want : when Eden-  
exiles feel  
Their Paradisal parentage, and  
search  
Even yet some fragrance through  
the thorny years  
From reachless gardens guarded by  
the sword.

Then those that brood above the  
fallen sun,  
Or lean from lonely casements to  
the moon,  
Turn round and miss the touching  
of a hand :  
Then sad thoughts seem to be more  
sweet than gay ones :  
Then old songs have a sound as  
pitiful  
As dead friends' voices, sometimes  
heard in dreams :  
And all a-tiptoe for some great  
event,  
The Present waits, her finger at her  
lips,  
The while the pensive Past with  
meek pale palms,  
Crost (where a child should lie) on  
her cold breast,  
And wistful eyes forlorn, stands  
mutely by,  
Reproaching Life with some un-  
uttered loss ;  
And the heart pines, a prisoned  
Danaë,

Till some God comes, and makes  
the air all golden.

In such a mood as this, at such an  
hour  
As makes sad thoughts fall saddest  
on the soul,  
She, in her topmost bower all alone,  
High-up among the battlemented  
roofs,  
Leaned from the lattice, where the  
road runs by  
To Camelot, and in the bulrush beds  
The marish river shrinks his stag-  
nant horn.  
All round, along the spectral arras,  
gleamed  
(With faces pale against the dreary  
light,  
Forms of great Queens—the women  
of old times.  
She felt their frowns upon her, and  
their smiles,  
And seemed to hear their garments  
rustling near.  
Her lute lay idle her love-books  
among :  
And, at her feet, flung by, the  
broidered scarf,  
And velvet mantle. On the verge  
of night  
She saw a bird float by, and wished  
for wings :  
She heard the hoarse frogs quarrel  
in the marsh :  
And now and then, with drowsy  
song and oar,  
Some dim barge sliding slow from  
bridge to bridge,  
Down the white river past, and far  
behind  
Left a new silence. Then she fell  
to muse  
Unto what end she came into this  
earth  
Whose reachless beauty made her  
heart so sad,  
As one that loves, but hopes not,  
inly ails  
In gazing on some fair unloving  
face.

Anon, there dropt down a great gulf  
 of sky  
 A star she knew ; and as she looked  
 at it,  
 Down-drawn through her intensity  
 of gaze,  
 One angry ray fell tangled in her  
 tears,  
 And dashed its blinding brightness  
 in her eyes.  
 She turned, and caught her lute, and  
 pensively  
 Rippled a random music down the  
 strings,  
 And sang . . .

All night the moonbeams bathe  
 the sward.  
 There's not an eye to-night in Joy-  
 ous-Gard  
 That is not dreaming something  
 sweet. I wake  
 Because it is more sweet to dream  
 awake :  
 Dreaming I see thy face upon the  
 lake.

I am come up from far, love, to be-  
 hold thee,  
 That hast waited for me so bravely  
 and well  
 Thy sweet life long (for the Fairies  
 had told thee  
 I am the Knight that shall loosen  
 the spell),  
 And to-morrow morn mine arms  
 shall infold thee :  
 And to-morrow night . . . ah, who  
 can tell ?

As the spirit of some dark lake  
 Pines at nightfall, wild-awake,  
 For the approaching consumma-  
 tion

Of a great moon he divines  
 Coming to her coronation  
 Of the dazzling stars and signs,  
 So my heart, my heart,  
 Darkly (ah, and tremblingly !)  
 Waits in mystic expectation  
 (From its wild source far apart)

Until it be filled with thee,—  
 With the full-orbed light of thee,—  
 O beloved as thou art !  
 With the soft sad smile that  
 flashes  
 Underneath thy long dark lashes ;  
 And thy floating raven hair  
 From its wreathed pearls let slip ;  
 And thy breath, like balmy air ;  
 And thy warm wet rosy lip,  
 With my first kiss lingering there ;  
 Its sweet secret unrevealed,—  
 Sealed by me, to me unsealed ;  
 And . . . but, ah ! she lies asleep  
 In yon gray stone castle-keep,  
 On her lids the happy tear ;  
 And alone I linger here ;  
 And to-morrow morn the fight ;  
 And . . . ah, me ! to-morrow  
 night ?

Here she brake, trembling, off ; and  
 on the lute,  
 Yet vibrating through its melodious  
 nerves,  
 A great tear plashed and tinkled.  
 For a while  
 She sat and mused ; and, heavily,  
 drop by drop,  
 Her tears fell down ; then through  
 them a slow smile  
 Stole, full of April-sweetness ; and  
 she sang—  
 —It was a sort of ballad of the sea :  
 A song of weather-beaten mariners,  
 Gray-headed men that had survived  
 all winds  
 And held a perilous sport among  
 the waves,  
 Who yet sang on with hearts as bold  
 as when  
 They cleared their native harbor  
 with a shout,  
 And lifted golden anchors in the  
 sun.

Merrily, merrily drove our barks,—  
 Merrily up from the morning beach !  
 And the brine broke under her  
 prows in sparks ;  
 For a spirit sat high at the helm of  
 each.

We sailed all day ; and, when day  
was done,  
Steered after the wake of the sunken  
sun,  
For we meant to follow him out of  
reach  
Till the golden dawn was again  
begun.

With lifted oars, with shout and  
song,

Merry mariners all were we !  
Every heart beat stout and strong.  
Through all the world you would  
not see,

Though you should journey wide  
and long,

A comelier company.

And where, the echoing creeks  
among,

Merrily, steadily,

From bay to bay our barks did fall,  
You might hear us singing, one and  
all,

A song of the mighty sea.

But, just at twilight, down the rocks  
Dim forms trooped fast, and clearer  
grew :

For out upon the sea-sand came  
The island-people, whom we knew,  
And called us :—girls with glowing  
locks ;

And sunburnt boys that tend the  
herd

Far up the vale ; gray elders too  
With silver beards :—their cries we  
heard :

They called us, each one by his  
name.

“Could ye not wait a little while,”

We heard them sing, “for all our  
sakes ?

A little while, in this old isle,”

They sung, “among the silver lakes?  
For here,” they sung, “from horn  
to horn

Of flowery bays the land is fair :

The hillside glows with grapes : the  
corn

Grows golden in the vale down there.

Our maids are sad for you,” they  
sung :

“Against the field no sickle falls :  
Upon the trees our harps are hung :  
Our doors are void : and in the  
stalls

The little foxes nest ; among  
The herd-rovéd hills no shepherd  
calls :

Your brethren mourn for you,” they  
sung.

“Here weep your wives: here passed  
your lives

Among the vines, when you were  
young :

Here dwell your sires : your house-  
hold fires

Grow cold. Return ! Return !” they  
sung.

Then each one saw his kinsman  
stand

Upon the shore, and wave his hand :  
And each grew sad. But still we  
sung

Our ocean-chorus bold and clear ;  
And still upon our oars we hung,  
And held our course with steadfast  
cheer.

“For we are bound for distant  
shores,”

We cried, and faster swept our oars:

“We pine to see the faces there  
Of men whose deeds we heard long  
since,

Who haunt our dreams : gray he-  
roes : kings

Whose fame the wandering minstrel  
sings :

And maidens, too, more fair than  
ours,

With deeper eyes and softer hair,  
Like hers that left her island bowers

To wed the sullen Cornish Prince  
Who keeps his court upon the hill

By the gray coasts of Tyntagill,  
And each, before he dies, must gain

Some fairy-land across the main.”

But still “return, beloved, return !”

The simple island-people sung :

And still each mariner's heart did  
burn,  
As each his kinsman could discern,  
Those dim green rocks among.

"O'er you the rough sea-blasts will  
blow,"  
They sung, "while here the skies  
are fair :  
Our paths are through the fields we  
know :  
And yours you know not where."

But we waved our hands . . . "fare-  
well ! farewell !"

We cried . . . "our white sails flap  
the mast :

Our course is set : our oars are wet :  
One day," we cried, "is nearly past :  
One day at sea ! Farewell ! fare-  
well !

No more with you we now may  
dwell !"

And the next day we were driving  
free

(With never a sail in sight)  
Over the face of the mighty sea,  
And we counted the stars next night  
Rise over us by two and three  
With melancholy light :  
A grave-eyed, earnest company,—  
And all round the salt foam white !

With this, she ceased, and sighed  
. . . "though I were far,

I know yon moated iris would not  
shed

His purple crown : yon clover-field  
would ripple

As merry in the waving wind as  
now :

As soft the Spring down this bare  
hill would steal,

And in the vale below fling all her  
flowers :

Each year the wet primroses star the  
woods :

And violets muffle the sharp rivu-  
lets :

Round this lone casement's solitary  
panes

The wandering ivy move and mount  
each year :  
Each year the red wheat gleam near  
river-banks :

While, ah, with each my memory  
from the hearts  
Of men would fade, and from their  
lips my name.

O which were best—the wide, the  
windy sea,

With golden gleams of undiscovered  
lands,

Odors, and murmurs—or the placid  
Port,

From wanton winds, from scornful  
waves secure,

Under the old, green, happy hills of  
home ?"

She sat forlorn, and pondered. Night  
was near,

And, marshalling o'er the hills her  
dewy camps,

Came down the outposts of the sen-  
tinel stars.

All in the owlet light she sat forlorn.

Now hostel, hall, and grange, that  
eve were crammed :

The town being choked to bursting  
of the gates :

For there the King yet lay with all  
his Earls,

And the Round Table, numbering  
all save one.

On many a curving terrace which  
o'erhung

The long gray river, swan-like,  
through the green

Of quaintest yews, moved, pacing  
stately by,

The lovely ladies of King Arthur's  
court.

Sighing, she eyed them from that  
lonely keep.

The Dragon-banners o'er the turrets  
drooped,

The heavy twilight hanging in their  
folds.



And now and then, from posterns in  
 the wall  
 The knights stole, lingering for  
 some last Good night,  
 Whispered or sighed through closing  
 lattices;  
 Or paused with reverence of bending  
 plumes,  
 And lips on jewelled fingers gayly  
 prest.  
 The silver cressets shone from pane  
 to pane: [forms:  
 And tapers flitted by with flitting  
 Clanged the dark streets with clash  
 of iron heels:  
 Or fell a sound of coits in clattering  
 courts,  
 And drowsy horse-boys singing in  
 the straw.  
 These noises floated upward. And  
 within,  
 From the great Hall, forever and  
 anon,  
 Brake gusts of revel; snatches of  
 wild song,  
 And laughter; where her sire among  
 his men  
 Caroused between the twilight and  
 the dark.  
 The silence round about her where  
 she sat,  
 Vext in itself, grew sadder for the  
 sound.  
 She closed her eyes: before them  
 seemed to float  
 A dream of lighted revels, — dance  
 and song  
 In Guenver's palace: gorgeous  
 tournaments;  
 And rows of glittering eyes about  
 the Queen  
 (Like stars in galaxies around the  
 moon),  
 That sparkled recognition down be-  
 low,  
 Where rode the knights amont with  
 lance and plume;  
 And each his lady's sleeve upon his  
 helm:

Murmuring . . . "none ride for me.  
 Am I not fair,  
 Whom men call the White Flower  
 of Astolat?"  
 Far, far without, the wild gray mar-  
 ish spread,  
 A heron started from the pools, and  
 flapped  
 The water from his wings, and  
 skirred away.  
 The last long limit of the dying light  
 Dropped, all on fire, behind an iron  
 cloud:  
 And, here and there, through some  
 wild chasm of blue, [fens  
 Tumbled a star. The mist upon the  
 Thickened. A billowy opal grew i'  
 the crofts,  
 Fed on the land, and sucked into  
 itself  
 Paling and park, close copse and  
 bushless down,  
 Changing the world for Fairies.  
 Then the moon  
 In the low east, unprisoned from  
 black bars  
 Of stagnant fog (a white light,  
 wrought to the full,  
 Summed in a perfect orb) rose sud-  
 deuly up  
 Upon the silence with a great sur-  
 prise,  
 And took the inert landscape un-  
 awares.  
 White, white, the snaky river: dark  
 the banks:  
 And dark the folding distance,  
 where her eyes  
 Were wildly turned, as though the  
 whole world lay  
 In that far blackness over Carlyel.  
 There she espied Sir Launcelot, as  
 he rode  
 His coal-black courser downward  
 from afar,  
 For all his armor glittered as he  
 went,  
 And showed like silver: and his  
 mighty shield,

By dint of knightly combat hackt  
and worn,  
Looked like some cracked and  
frozen moon than hangs  
By night o'er Baltic headlands all  
alone.

TO —.

As, in lone fairy-lands, up some rich  
shelf  
Of golden sand the wild wave moan-  
ingly  
Heaps its unvalued sea-wealth, weed  
and gem,  
Then creeps back slow into the salt  
sad sea :  
So from my life's new searched  
deeps to thee,  
Beloved, I cast these weed-flowers.  
Smile on them.  
More than they mean I know not to  
express.  
So I shrink back into my old sad  
self,  
Far from all words where love lies  
fathomless.

QUEEN GUENEVERE.

THENCE, up the sea-green floor,  
among the stems  
Of mighty columns whose unmeas-  
ured shades  
From aisle to aisle, unheeded in the  
sun,  
Moved without sound, I, following  
all alone  
A strange desire that drew me like  
a hand,  
Came unawares upon the Queen.  
She sat  
In a great silence, which her beauty  
filled  
Full to the heart of it, on a black  
chair  
Mailed all about with sullen gems,  
and crusts  
Of sultry blazonry. Her face was  
bowed,  
A pause of slumbrous beauty, o'er  
the light

Of some delicious thought new-risen  
above  
The deeps of passion. Round her  
stately head  
A single circlet of the red gold fine  
Burned free, from which, on either  
side streamed down  
Twilights of her soft hair, from  
neck to foot. [is,  
Green was her kirtle as the emeralde  
And stiff from hem to hem with  
seams of stones  
Beyond all value; which, from left  
to right  
Disparting, half revealed the snowy  
gleam  
Of a white robe of spotless samite  
pure.  
And from the soft repression of her  
zone,  
Which like a light hand on a lute-  
string pressed  
Harmony from its touch, flowed  
warmly back  
The bounteous outlines of a glow-  
ing grace,  
Nor yet outflowed sweet laws of  
loveliness.

Then did I feel as one who, much  
perplext,  
Led by strange legends and the light  
of stars  
Over long regions of the midnight  
sand  
Beyond the red tract of the Pyra-  
mids, [sky  
Is suddenly drawn to look upon the  
From sense of unfamiliar light, and  
sees,  
Revealed against the constellated  
cope  
The great cross of the South.  
The chamber round  
Was dropt with arras green; and I  
could hear,  
In courts far off, a minstrel praising  
May,  
Who sang . . . *Si douce, si douce  
est la Margarete!*

To a faint lute. Upon the window-sill,  
 Hard by a latoun bowl that blazed i' the sun  
 Perched a strange fowl, a Falcon Peregrine ;  
 With all his feathers puffed for pride, and all  
 His courage glittering outward in his eye ;  
 For he had flown from far, athwart strange lands,  
 And o'er the light of many a setting sun,  
 Lured by his love (such sovereignty of old  
 Had Beauty in all coasts of Christendom !)  
 To look into the great eyes of the Queen.

## THE NEGLECTED HEART.

THIS heart, you would not have,  
 I laid up in a grave  
 Of song : with love enwound it ;  
 And set sweet fancies blowing round it.  
 Then I to others gave it ;  
 Because you would not have it.  
 "See you keep it well," I said ;  
 "This heart's sleeping—is not dead ;  
 But will wake some future day :  
 See you keep it while you may."

All great Sorrows in the world,—  
 Some with crowns upon their heads,  
 And in regal purple furled ;  
 Some with rosaries and Leads ;  
 Some with lips of scorning, curled  
 At false Fortune ; some, in weeds  
 Of mourning and of widowhood,  
 Standing tearful and apart,—  
 Each one in his several mood,  
 Came to take my heart.

Then in holy ground they set it ;  
 With melodious weepings wet it  
 And revered it as they found it,  
 With wild fancies blowing round it.

And this heart (you would not have)  
 Being not dead, though in the grave,  
 Worked miracles and marvels strange,  
 And healed many maladies :  
 Giving sight to sealed-up eyes,  
 And legs to lame men sick for change.

The fame of it grew great and greater.

Then said you, "Ah, what's the matter ?"

How hath this heart I would not take,

This weak heart a child might break—

This poor, foolish heart of his—  
 Since won worship such as this ?"

You bethought you then . . . "Ah me,

What if this heart, I did not choose  
 To retain, hath found the key  
 Of the kingdom ? and I lose  
 A great power ? Me he gave it :  
 Mine the right, and I will have it."

Ah, too late ! For crowds exclaimed,  
 "Ours it is . and hath been claimed.  
 Moreover, where it lies, the spot  
 Is holy ground : so enter not.  
 None but men of mournful mind,—  
 Men to darkened days resigned ;  
 Equal scorn of Saint and Devil ;  
 Poor and outcast ; halt and blind ;  
 Exiles from Life's golden revel ;  
 Gnawing at the bitter rind  
 Of old griefs ; or else, confined  
 In proud cares, to serve and grind,—  
 May enter : whom this heart shall cure.

But go thou by : thou art not poor :  
 Nor defrauded of thy lot :  
 Bless thyself : but enter not !"

## APPEARANCES.

WELL, you have learned to smile.  
 And no one looks for traces  
 Of tears about your eyes.  
 Your face is like most faces.  
 And who will ask, meanwhile,  
 If your face your heart belies ?

Are you happy? You look so.  
Well, I wish you what you seem.  
Happy persons sleep so light!  
In your sleep you never dream?  
But who would care to know  
What dreams you dreamed last  
night?

#### HOW THE SONG WAS MADE.

I SAT low down, at midnight, in a  
vale  
Mysterious with the silence of blue  
pines :  
White-cloven by a snaky river-tail,  
Uncoiled from tangled wefts of sil-  
ver twines.

Out of a crumbling castle, on a spike  
Of splintered rock, a mile of  
changeless shade  
Gorged half the landscape. Down a  
dismal dike  
Of black hills the sluiced moon-  
beams streamed, and stayed.

The world lay like a poet in a swoon,  
When God is on him, filled with  
Heaven, all through,—  
A dim face full of dreams turned to  
the moon,  
With mild lips moist in melan-  
choly dew.

I plucked blue mugwort, livid man-  
drakes, balls  
Of blossomed nightshade, heads of  
hemlock, long  
White grasses, grown in oozy inter-  
vals  
Of marsh, to make ingredients for  
a song :

A song of mourning to embalm the  
Past,—  
The corpse-cold Past,—that it  
should not decay ;  
But in dark vaults of memory, to the  
last,  
Endure unchanged : for in some  
future day

I will bring my new love to look at  
it  
(Laying aside her gay robes for a  
moment)  
That, seeing what love came to, she  
may sit  
Silent awhile, and muse, but make  
no comment.

#### RETROSPECTIONS.

TO-NIGHT she will dance at the  
palace,  
With the diamonds in her hair :  
And the Prince will praise her  
beauty—  
The loveliest lady there !

But tones, at times, in the music  
Will bring back forgotten things :  
And her heart will fail her some-  
times,  
When her beauty is praised at the  
King's.

There sits in his silent chamber  
A stern and sorrowful man :  
But a strange sweet dream comes to  
him,  
While the lamp is burning wan,

Of a sunset among the vineyards  
In a lone and lovely land,  
And a maiden standing near him,  
With fresh wild-flowers in her  
hand.

#### THY VOICE ACROSS MY SPIRIT FALLS.

THY voice across my spirit falls  
Like some spent sea-wind through  
dim halls  
Of ocean-king's, left bare and wide  
(Green floors o'er which the sea-  
weed crawls !)  
Where once, long since, in festal  
pride  
Some Chief, who roved and ruled the  
tide,  
Among his brethren reigned and  
died.

I dare not meet thine eyes ; for so,  
 In gazing there, I seem once more  
 To lapse away through days of yore  
 To homes where laugh and song is  
 o'er,  
 Whose inmates each went long ago—  
 Like some lost soul, that keeps the  
 semblance  
 On its brow of ancient grace  
 Not all faded, wandering back  
 To silent chambers, in the track  
 Of the twilight, from the Place  
 Of retributive Remembrance.  
 Ah, turn aside those eyes again !  
 Their light has less of joy than pain.  
 We are not now what we were then.

### THE RUINED PALACE.

BROKEN are the Palace windows :  
 Rotting is the Palace floor.  
 The damp wind lifts the arras,  
 And swings the creaking door ;  
 But it only startles the white owl  
 From his perch on a monarch's  
 throne,  
 And the rat that was gnawing the  
 harp-strings  
 A Queen once played upon.

Dare you linger here at midnight  
 Alone, when the wind is about,  
 And the bat, and the newt, and the  
 viper,  
 And the creeping things come out?  
 Beware of these ghostly chambers !  
 Search not what my heart hath  
 been,  
 Lest you find a phantom sitting  
 Where once there sat a Queen.

### A VISION OF VIRGINS.

I HAD a vision of the night.  
 It seemed  
 There was a long red tract of barren  
 land,  
 Blockt in by black hills, where a  
 half-moon dreamed

Of morn, and whitened.  
 Drifts of dry brown sand,  
 This way and that, were heapt be-  
 low : and flats  
 Of water :—glaring shallows, where  
 strange bats  
 Came and went, and moths flick-  
 ered.

To the right  
 A dusty road that crept along the  
 waste  
 Like a white snake : and, farther up,  
 I traced  
 The shadow of a great house, far in  
 sight :  
 A hundred casements all ablaze  
 with light :  
 And forms that flit athwart them as  
 in haste :  
 And a slow music, such as some-  
 times kings  
 Command at mighty revels, softly  
 sent  
 From viol, and flute, and tabor, and  
 the strings  
 Of many a sweet and slumbrous in-  
 strument  
 That wound into the mute heart of  
 the night  
 Out of that distance.

Then I could perceive  
 A glory pouring through an open  
 door,  
 And in the light five women. I be-  
 lieve  
 They wore white vestments, all of  
 them. They were  
 Quite calm ; and each still face un-  
 earthly fair,  
 Unearthly quiet. So like statues  
 all,  
 Waiting they stood without that  
 lighted hall ;  
 And in their hands, like a blue star,  
 they held  
 Each one a silver lamp.  
 Then I beheld  
 A shadow in the doorway. And One  
 came  
 Crowned for a feast. I could not  
 see the Face.

The Form was not all human. As  
 the flame  
 Streamed over it, a presence took  
 the place  
 With awe.  
 He, turning, took them by the  
 hand,  
 And led them each up the white  
 stairway, and  
 The door closed.

At that moment the moon dipped  
 Behind a rag of purple vapor, ript  
 Off a great cloud, some dead wind,  
 ere it spent  
 Its last breath, had blown open, and  
 so rent  
 You saw behind blue pools of light,  
 and there  
 A wild star swimming in the lurid  
 air.  
 The dream was darkened. And a  
 sense of loss  
 Fell like a nightmare on the land :  
 because  
 The moon yet lingered in her cloud-  
 eclipse.  
 Then, in the dark, swelled sullenly  
 across  
 The waste a wail of women.  
 Her blue lips  
 The moon drew up out of the cloud.  
 Again  
 I had a vision on that midnight  
 plain.

Five women : and the beauty of  
 despair  
 Upon their faces : locks of wild wet  
 hair,  
 Clammy with anguish, wandered low  
 and loose  
 O'er their bare breasts, that seemed  
 too filled with trouble  
 To feel the damp crawl of the mid-  
 night dews  
 That trickled down them. One was  
 bent half double,  
 A dismayed heap, that hung o'er  
 the last spark

Of a lamp slowly dying. As she  
 blew  
 The dull light redder, and the dry  
 wick flew  
 In crumbling sparkles all about the  
 dark,  
 I saw a light of horror in her eyes ;  
 A wild light on her flusht cheek ; a  
 wild white  
 On her dry lips ; an agony of surprise  
 Fearfully fair.

The lamp dropped. From my sight  
 She fell into the dark.

Beside her, sat  
 One without motion : and her stern  
 face flat  
 Against the dark sky.

One, as still as death,  
 Hollowed her hands about her lamp.  
 for fear  
 Some motion of the midnight, or her  
 breath,  
 Should fan out the last flicker. Rosy-  
 clear  
 The light oozed, through her fingers,  
 o'er her face  
 There was a ruined beauty hovering  
 there  
 Over deep pain, and, dasht with  
 lurid grace  
 A waning bloom.

The light grew dim and blear :  
 And she, too, slowly darkened in her  
 place.

Another, with her white hands hotly  
 lockt  
 About her damp knees, muttering  
 madness, rocked  
 Forward and backward. But at last  
 she stopped,  
 And her dark head upon her bosom  
 dropped  
 Motionless.

Then one rose up with a cry  
 To the great moon ; and stretched a  
 wrathful arm

Of wild expostulation to the sky,  
 Murmuring, "These earth-lamps fall  
 us ! and what harm ?

Does not the moon shine ? Let us  
 rise and haste

To meet the Bridegroom yonder o'er  
the waste !

For now I seem to catch once more  
the tone

Of viols on the night. 'Twere better  
done,

At worst, to perish near the golden  
gate,

And fall in sight of glory one by one,  
Than here all night upon the wild,  
to wait

Uncertain ills. Away ! the hour is  
late !”

Again the moon dipped.

I could see no more.  
Not the least gleam of light did  
heaven afford.

At last, I heard a knocking on a door,  
And some one crying, “Open to us,  
Lord !”

There was an awful pause.

I heard my heart  
Beat.

Then a Voice—“I know you not.  
Depart.”

I caught, within, a glimpse of glory.  
And

The door closed.

Still in darkness dreamed the land.  
I could not see those women. Not  
a breath !

Darkness, and awe : a darkness more  
than death.

The darkness took them. \* \* \* \* \*

### LEOLINE.

IN the molten-golden moonlight,  
In the deep grass warm and dry,  
We watched the fire-fly rise and  
swim

In floating sparkles by.  
All night the hearts of nightingales,  
Song-steeping, slumbrous leaves,  
Flowed to us in the shadow there  
Below the cottage-eaves.

We sang our songs together  
Till the stars shook in the skies.

We spoke — we spoke of common  
things,

Yet the tears were in our eyes.  
And my hand,—I know it trembled  
To each light warm touch of thine.  
But we were friends, and only  
friends,  
My sweet friend, Leoline !

How large the white moon looked,  
Dear !

There has not ever been  
Since those old nights the same great  
light

In the moons which I have seen.  
I often wonder, when I think,  
If you have thought so too,  
And the moonlight has grown dim-  
mer. Dear,  
Than it used to be to you.

And sometimes, when the warm  
west-wind

Comes faint across the sea,  
It seems that you have breathed on  
it,

So sweet it comes to me :  
And sometimes, when the long light  
wanes

In one deep crimson line,  
I muse, “and does she watch it too,  
Far off, sweet Leoline ?”

And often, leaning all day long

My head upon my hands;  
My heart aches for the vanished time  
In the far fair foreign lands :  
Thinking sadly—“Is she happy ?  
Has she tears for those old hours ?  
And the cottage in the starlight ?  
And the songs among the flow-  
ers ?”

One night we sat below the porch,  
And out in that warm air,  
A fire-fly, like a dying star,  
Fell tangled in her hair ;  
But I kissed him lightly off again,  
And he glittered up the vine,  
And died into the darkness  
For the love of Leoline !

Between two songs of Petrarch  
 I've a purple rose-leaf prest,  
 More sweet than common rose-  
 leaves,  
 For it once lay in her breast.  
 When she gave me that her eyes  
 were wet,  
 The rose was full of dew.  
 The rose is withered long ago ;  
 The page is blistered too.

There's a blue flower in my garden,  
 The bee loves more than all :  
 The bee and I, we love it both,  
 Though it is frail and small.  
 She loved it too — long, long ago :  
 Her love was less than mine.  
 Still we are friends, but only  
 friends,  
 My lost love, Leoline !

#### SPRING AND WINTER.

THE world buds every year :  
 But the heart just once, and when  
 The blossom falls off sere  
 No new blossom comes again.  
 Ah, the rose goes with the wind :  
 But the thorns remain behind.

Was it well in him, if he  
 Felt not love, to speak of love so ?  
 If he still unmoved must be,  
 Was it nobly sought to move so ?  
 — Pluck the flower, and yet not wear  
 it—  
 Spurn, despise it, yet not spare it ?

Need he say that I was fair,  
 With such meaning in his tone,  
 Just to speak of one whose hair  
 Had the same tinge as my own ?  
 Pluck my life up, root and bloom,  
 Just to plant it on her tomb ?

And she'd scarce so fair a face  
 (So he used to say) as mine :  
 And her form had far less grace :  
 And her brow was far less fine :  
 But 'twas just that he loved then  
 More than he can love again.

Why, if Beauty could not bind him,  
 Need he praise me, speaking low :  
 Use my face just to remind him  
 How no face could please him  
 now ?

Why, if loving could not move him  
 Did he teach me still to love him ?

And he said my eyes were bright,  
 But his own, he said, were dim :  
 And my hand, he said, was white,  
 But what was that to him ?  
 " For," he said, " in gazing at you  
 I seem gazing at a statue."

" Yes," he said, " he had grown  
 wise now :  
 He had suffered much of yore :  
 But, a fair face to his eyes now,  
 Was a fair face, and no more.  
 Yet the anguish and the bliss,  
 And the dream too, had been his."

Then, why talk of " lost romances "  
 Being " sick of sentiment ! "  
 And what meant those tones and  
 glances

If real love was never neant ?  
 Why, if his own youth were with-  
 ered,  
 Must mine also have been gathered ?

Why those words a thought too  
 tender

For the commonplaces spoken ?  
 Looks whose meaning seemed to  
 render

Help to words when speech came  
 broken ?

Why so late in July moonlight  
 Just to say what's said by noon-  
 light ?

And why praise my youth for glad-  
 ness,

Keeping something in his smile  
 Which turned all my youth to sad-  
 ness,

He still smiling all the while ?  
 Since, when so my youth was over  
 He said — " Seek some younger  
 lover ! "



“For the world buds once a year,  
But the heart just once,” he said.  
True! . . . so now that Spring is  
here  
All my flowers, like his, are dead.  
And the rose drops in the wind.  
But the thorns remain behind.

## KING HERMANDIAZ.

THEN, standing by the shore, I saw  
the moon

Change hue, and dwindle in the  
west, as when  
Warm looks fade inward out of dy-  
ing eyes,  
And the dim sea began to moan.

I knew

My hour had come, and to the bark  
I went.

Still were the stately decks, and hung  
with silk

Of stoled crimson: at the mast-head  
burned

A steadfast fire with influence like  
a star,

And underneath a couch of gold. I  
loosed

The dripping chain. There was not  
any wind:

But all at once the magic sails began  
To belly and heave, and like a bat  
that wakes

And flits by night, beneath her  
swarthy wings

The black ship rocked and moved.  
I heard anon

A humming in the cordage and a  
sound

Like bees in summer, and the bark  
went on,

And on, and on, until at last the  
world

Was rolled away and folded out of  
sight,

And I was all alone on the great sea.  
There a deep awe fell on my spirit.

My wound

Began to bite. I, gazing round, be-  
held

A lady sitting silent at the helm,

A woman white as death, and fair  
as dreams.

I would have asked her “Whither  
do we sail?”

And “how?” but that my fear  
clung at my heart,

And held me still. She, answering  
my doubt,

Said slowly, “To the Isle of Ava-  
lon.”

And straightway we were nigh a  
strand all gold,

That glittered in the moon between  
the dusk

Of hanging bowers made rich with  
blooms and balms,

From which faint gusts came to me;  
and I heard

A sound of lutes among the vales,  
and songs

And voices faint like voices through  
a dream

That said or seemed to say, “Hail,  
Hermandiaz!”

## SONG.

In the warm, black mill-pool wink-  
ing,

The first doubtful star shines blue:  
And alone here I lie thinking

O such happy thoughts of you!

Up the porch the roses clamber,  
And the flowers we sowed last

June;

And the casement of your chamber  
Shines between them to the moon.

Look out, Love! fling wide the lat-  
tice:

Wind the red rose in your hair,  
And the little white clematis

Which I plucked for you to wear:

Or come down, and let me hear you  
Singing in the scented grass,

Through tall cowslips nodding near  
you,

Just to touch you as you pass,

For, where you pass, the air  
With warm hints of love grows  
wise :

You — the dew on your dim hair,  
And the smile in your soft eyes !

From the hayfield comes your  
brother :

There your sisters stand together,  
Singing clear to one another  
Through the dark blue summer  
weather,

And the maid the latch is clinking  
As she lets her lover through :  
But alone, Love, I lie thinking  
O such tender thoughts of you !

#### THE SWALLOW.

O SWALLOW chirping in the spark-  
ling eyes,  
Why hast thou left far south thy  
fairy homes,  
To build between these drenchéd  
April leaves,  
And sing me songs of Spring be-  
fore it comes ?

Too soon thou singest ! You black  
stubborn thorn  
Bursts not a bud : the sneaping  
wind drifts on.  
She that once flung thee crumbs,  
and in the morn  
Sang from the lattice where thou  
sing'st, is gone.  
Here is no Spring. Thy flight yet  
further follow.  
Fly off, vain swallow !

Thou com'st to mock me with re-  
membered things.  
I love thee not, O bird for me too  
gay.  
That which I want thou hast, — the  
gift of wings :  
Grief — which I have — thou hast  
not. Fly away !  
What hath my roof for thee ? My  
cold dark roof,

Beneath whose weeping thatch  
thine eggs will freeze !  
Summer will halt not here, so keep  
aloof.

Others are gone ; go thou. In those  
wet trees  
I see no Spring, though thou still  
singest of it.  
Fare hence, false prophet !

#### CONTRABAND.

A HEAP of low, dark, rocky coast,  
Where the blue-black sea sleeps  
smooth and even :  
And the sun, just over the reefs at  
most,  
In the amber part of a pale blue  
heaven :

A village asleep below the pines,  
Hid up the gray shore from the  
low slow sun :  
And a maiden that lingers among  
the vines,  
With her feet in the dews, and her  
locks undone :

The half-moon melting out of the  
sky ;  
And, just to be seen still, a star  
here, a star there,  
Faint, high up in the heart of the  
heaven ; so high  
And so faint, you can scarcely be  
sure that they are there.

And one of that small, black, raking  
craft ;  
Two swivel guns on a round deck  
handy ;  
And a great sloop sail with the wind  
abaft ;  
And four brown thieves round a  
cask of brandy.

That's my life, as I left it last.  
And what it may be henceforth I  
know not.  
But all that I keep of the merry  
Past  
Are trifles like these, which I care  
to show not : —

A leathern flask, and a necklace of  
 pearl ;  
 These rusty pistols, this tattered  
 chart, Friend,  
 And the soft dark half of a raven  
 curl ;  
 And, at evening, the thought of a  
 true, true heart, Friend.

## EVENING.

ALREADY evening ! In the duskiest  
 nook  
 Of yon dusk corner, under the  
 Death's-head,  
 Between the alembecs, thrust this  
 legended,  
 And iron-bound, and melancholy  
 book,  
 For I will read no longer. The loud  
 brook  
 Shelves his sha.p light up shallow  
 banks thin-spread ;  
 The slumbrous west grows slowly  
 red, and red :  
 Up from the ripened corn her silver  
 hook  
 The moon is lifting : and deli-  
 ciously  
 Along the warm blue hills the day  
 declines :  
 The first star brightens while she  
 waits for me,  
 And round her swelling heart the  
 zone grows tight :  
 Musing, half-sad, in her soft hair  
 she twines  
 The white rose, whispering, "he  
 will come to-night !"

## ADON.

I WILL not weep for Adon !  
 I will not waste my breath to draw  
 thick sighs  
 For Spring's dead greenness. All  
 the orient skies  
 Are husht, and breathing out a  
 bright surprise  
 Round morning's marshalling star :  
 Rise, Eos, rise !

Day's dazzling spears are up : the  
 faint stars fade on  
 The white hills,—cold, like Adon !

O'er crag, and spar, and splinter  
 Break down, and roll the amber mist,  
 stern light.  
 The black pines dream of dawn.  
 The skirts of night  
 Are ravelled in the East. And  
 planted bright  
 In heaven, the roots of ice shine,  
 sharp and white,  
 In frozen ray, and spar, and spike,  
 and splinter.  
 Within me and without, all's Win-  
 ter.

Why should I weep for Adon ?  
 Am I, because the sweet Past is no  
 more,  
 Dead, as the leaves upon the graves  
 of yore ?  
 I will breathe boldly, though the air  
 be frore  
 With freezing fire. Life still beats  
 at the core  
 Of the world's heart, though Death  
 his awe hath laid on  
 This dumb white corpse of Adon.

## THE PROPHET.

WHEN the East lightens with strange  
 hints of morn,  
 The first tinge of the growing glory  
 takes  
 The cold crown of some husht high  
 alp forlorn,  
 While yet o'er vales below the dark  
 is spread.  
 Even so the dawning Age, in silence,  
 breaks,  
 O solitary soul, on thy still head :  
 And we, that watch below with rev-  
 erent fear,  
 Seeing thee crowned, do know that  
 day is near.

## WEALTH.

Was it not enough to dream the day  
to death

Grandly? and finely feed on faint  
perfumes?

Between the heavy lilacs draw thick  
breath,

While the noon hummed from  
glowing citron-glooms?

Or walk with Morning in these  
dewy bowers,

'Mid sheavéd lilies, and the moth-  
loved lips

Of purple asters, bearded flat sun-  
flowers,

And milk-white crumpled pinks  
with blood i' the tips?

But I must also, gazing upon thee,  
Pine with delicious pain, and  
subtle smart,

Till I felt heavy immortality,  
Laden with looks of thine, weigh  
on my heart!

## WANT.

You swore you loved me all last  
June:

And now December's come and  
gone.

The Summer went with you—too  
soon.

The Winter goes—alone.

Next Spring the leaves will all be  
be green:

But love like ours, once turned to  
pain,

Can be no more what it hath been,  
Though roses bloom again.

Return, return the unvalued wealth  
I gave! which scarcely profits  
you—

The heart's lost youth—the soul's  
lost health—

In vain! . . . false friend, adieu!

I keep one faded violet  
Of all once ours,—you left no  
more.

What I have lost I may forget,  
But you cannot restore.

## A BIRD AT SUNSET.

WILD bird, that wingest wide the  
glimmering moors,

Whither, by belts of yellowing  
woods away?

With pausing sunset thy wild heart  
allures

Deep into dying day?

Would that my heart, on wings like  
thine, could pass

Where stars their light in rosy re-  
gions lose,—

A happy shadow o'er the warm  
brown grass,

Falling with falling dews!

Hast thou, like me, some true-love  
of thine own,

In fairy lands beyond the utmost  
seas;

Who there, unsolaced, yearns for  
thee alone,

And sings to silent trees?

O tell that woodbird that the Sum-  
mer grieves,

And the suns darken and the days  
grow cold;

And, tell her, love will fade with fad-  
ing leaves,

And cease in common mould.

Fly from the winter of the world to  
her!

Fly, happy bird! I follow in thy  
flight,

Till thou art lost o'er yonder fringe  
of fir

In baths of crimson light.

My love is dying far away from me.  
She sits and saddens in the fading  
west.

For her I mourn all day, and pine  
to be  
At night upon her breast.

## IN TRAVEL.

Now our white sail flutters down :  
Now it broadly takes the breeze :  
Now the wharves upon the town,  
Lessening, leave us by degrees.  
Blithely blows the morning, shaking  
On your cheek the loosened curls :  
Round our prow the cleft wave,  
breaking,  
Tumbles off in heap'd pearls,  
Which in forks of foam unite,  
And run seething out to sea,  
Where o'er gleams of briny light  
Dip the dancing gulls in glee.  
Now the mountain serpentine  
Slips out many a snaky line  
Down the dark blue ocean-spine.  
From the boatside, while we pass,  
I can see, as in a glass,  
Pirates on the flat sea-sand,  
Carousing ere they put from land ;  
And the purple-pointed crests  
Of hills whereon the morning rests  
Whose ethereal vivid peaks  
Glimmer in the lucid creeks.  
Now these wind away ; and now  
Hamlets up the mountain-brow  
Peep and peer from roof to roof ;  
And gray castle-walls aloof  
O'er wide vineyards just in grape,  
From whose serfs old Barons held  
Tax and till in feudal eld,  
Creep out of the uncoiling cape.  
Now the long low layer of mist  
A slow trouble rolls and lifts,  
With a broken billowy motion,  
From the rocks and from the rifts,  
Laying bare, just here and there,  
Black stone-pines, at morn dew-kist  
By salt winds from bound to bound  
Of the great sea freshening round ;  
Wattled folds on bleak brown downs  
Sloping high o'er sleepy towns ;  
Lengths of shore and breadths of  
ocean.

Love, lean here upon my shoulder,  
And look yonder, love, with me :  
Now I think that I can see  
In the merry market-places  
Sudden warmths of sunny faces :  
Many a lovely laughing maiden  
Bearing on her loose dark locks  
Rich fruit-baskets heavy-laden,  
In and out among the rocks,  
Knowing not that we behold her,  
Now, love, tell me, can you hear,  
Growing nearer, and more near,  
Sound of song, and splash of oar,  
From wild bays, and inlets hoar,  
While above you Isles afar  
Ghostlike sinks last night's last star?

## CHANGES.

WHOM first we love, you know, we  
seldom wed.  
Time rules us all. And Life, in-  
deed, is not  
The thing we planned it out ere hope  
was dead.  
And then, we women cannot  
choose our lot.  
Much must be borne which it is hard  
to bear :  
Much given away which it were  
sweet to keep.  
God help us all ! who need, indeed,  
His care.  
And yet, I know, the Shepherd  
loves His sheep.  
My little boy begins to babble now  
Upon my knee his earliest infant  
prayer.  
He has his father's eager eyes, I  
know.  
And, they say too, his mother's  
sunny hair.  
But when he sleeps and smiles upon  
my knee,  
And I can feel his light breath  
come and go,  
I think of one (Heaven help and  
pity me !)  
Who loved me, and whom I loved  
long ago.

Who might have been . . . ah, what  
I dare not think!

We all are changed. God judges  
for us best.

God help us do our duty, and not  
shrink,

And trust in heaven humbly for  
the rest.

But blame us women not, if some  
appear

Too cold at times; and some too  
gay and light.

Some griefs gnaw deep. Some woes  
are hard to bear.

Who knows the Past? and who  
can judge us right?

Ah, were we judged by what we  
might have been,

And not by what we are, too apt  
to fall!

My little child—he sleeps and smiles  
between

These thoughts and me. In heaven  
we shall know all!

#### JUDICIUM PARIDIS.

I SAID, when young, "Beauty's the  
supreme joy.

Her I will choose, and in all forms  
will face her;

Eye to eye, lip to lip, and so em-  
brace her

With my whole heart." I said this  
being a boy.

"First, I will seek her,—naked, or  
clad only

In her own godhead, as I know of  
yore

Great bards beheld her." So by  
sea and shore

I sought her, and among the moun-  
tains lonely.

There be great sunsets in the won-  
drous West;

And marvel in the orbings of the  
moon;

And glory in the jubilees of June;  
And power in the deep ocean. For  
the rest,

"Green-glaring glaciers; purple  
clouds of pine

White walls of ever-roaring cata-  
racts;

Blue thunder drifting over thirsty  
tracts;

The homes of eagles; these, too are  
divine,

"And terror shall not daunt me—  
so it be

Beautiful—or in storm or in  
eclipse:

Rocking pink shells, or wrecking  
freighted ships,

I shall not shrink to find her in the  
sea.

"Next, I will seek her—in all shapes  
of wood,

Or brass, or marble; or in colors  
clad;

And sensuous lines, to make my  
spirit glad.

And she shall change her dress with  
every mood.

"Rose-latticed casements, lone in  
summer-lands—

Some witch's bower: pale sailors  
on the marge

Of magic seas, in an enchanted  
barge

Stranded, at sunset, upon jewelled  
sands:

"White nymphs among the lilies:  
shepherd kings:

And pink-hooved Fawns: and  
mooned Endymions:

From every channel through which  
Beauty runs

To fertilize the world with lovely  
things.

"I will draw freely, and be satisfied.  
Also, all legends of her apparition

To men, in earliest times, in each  
condition,  
I will inscribe on portraits of my  
bride.

“Then, that no single sense of her  
be wanting,  
Music; and all voluptuous com-  
binations  
Of sound, with their melodious  
palpitations  
To charm the ear, the cells of fancy  
haunting.

“And in her courts my life shall be  
outrolled  
As one unfurls some gorgeous  
tapestry,  
Wrought o’er with old Olympian  
heraldry,  
All purple-woven stiff with blazing  
gold.

“And I will choose no sight for  
tears to flow:  
I will not look at sorrow: I will  
see  
Nothing less fair and full of  
majesty  
Than young Apollo leaning on his  
bow.

“And I will let things come and go:  
nor range  
For knowledge: but from mo-  
ments pluck delight,  
The while the great days ope and  
shut in light,  
And wax and wane about me, rich  
with change.

“Some cup of dim hills, where a  
white moon lies,  
Dropt out of weary skies without  
a breath,  
In a great pool: a slumbrous vale  
beneath:  
And blue damps prickling into white  
fire-flies:

“Some sunset vision of an Oread,  
less  
Than half an hour ere moonrise  
caught asleep  
With a flushed cheek, among crusht  
violets deep,—  
A warm half-glimpse of milk-white  
nakedness,

“On sumptuous summer eves: shall  
wake for me  
Rapture from all the various stops  
of life:  
Making it like some charmed Ar-  
cadian fife  
Filled by a wood-god with his  
ecstasy.”

These things I said while I was yet  
a boy,  
And the world showed as between  
dream and waking  
A man may see the face he loves.  
So, breaking  
Silence, I cried . . . “Thou art the  
supreme Joy!”

My spirit, as a lark hid near the sun,  
Carolled at morning. But ere  
she had dropt  
Half down the rainbow-colored  
years that propped  
Her gold cloud up, and broadly, one  
by one

The world’s great harvest-lands  
broke on her eye,  
She changed her tone, . . . “What  
is it I may keep?  
For look here, how the merry  
reapers reap:  
Even children glean: and each puts  
something by.

“The pomps of morning pass:  
when evening comes,  
What is retained of these which I  
may show?  
If for the hills I leave the fields  
below  
I fear to die an exile from men’s  
homes.

“Though here I see the orient  
pageants pass,  
I am not richer than the merest  
hind  
That toils below, all day, among  
his kind,  
And clinks at eve glad horns in the  
dry grass.”

Then, pondering long, at length I  
made confession.

“I have erred much, rejecting all  
that man did :  
For all my pains I shall go empty  
handed :  
And Beauty, of its nature foils pos-  
session.”

Thereafter, I said . . . “ Knowledge  
is most fair.

Surely to know is better than to  
see  
To see is loss : to know is gain :  
and we  
Grow old. I will store thriftily, with  
care.”

In which mood I endured for many  
years,  
Valuing all things for their further  
uses :

And seeking knowledge at all  
open sluices ;  
Though oft the stream turned brack-  
ish with my tears.

Yet not the less, for years in this  
same mood

I rested : nor from any object  
turned  
That had its secret to be spelled  
and learned,  
Murmuring ever, “ Knowledge is  
most good.”

Unto which end I shunned the  
revelling

And ignorant crowd, that eat the  
fruits and die :  
And called out Plato from his  
century  
To be my helpmate : and made  
Homer sing.

Until the awful Past in gathered  
heaps

Weighed on my brain, and sunk  
into my soul,  
And saddened through my nature,  
till the whole  
Of life was darkened downward to  
the deeps.

And, wave on wave, the melancholy  
ages

Crept o'er my spirit : and the  
years displaced  
The landmarks of the days : life  
waned, effaced  
From action by the sorrows of the  
sages :

And my identity became at last  
The record of those others : or, if  
more,

A hollow shell the sea sung in : a  
shore  
Of footprints which the waves  
washed from it fast.

And all was as a dream whence,  
holding breath,  
It seemed, at times, just possible to  
break

By some wild nervous effort, with  
a shriek,  
Into the real world of life and death.

But that thought saved me. Through  
the dark I screamed

Against the darkness, and the  
darkness broke,  
And broke that nightmare : back  
to life I woke,  
Though weary with the dream  
which I had dreamed.

O life ! life ! life ! With laughter  
and with tears

I tried myself : I knew that I had  
need  
Of pain to prove that this was life  
indeed,  
With its warm privilege of hopes and  
fears.



O Love of man made Life of man,  
that saves!

O man, that standest looking on  
the light:

That standest on the forces of the  
night:

That standest up between the stars  
and graves!

O man! by man's dread privilege of  
pain,

Dare not to scorn thine own soul  
nor thy brother's:

Though thou be more or less than  
all the others.

Man's life is all too sad for man's  
disdain.

The smiles of seraphs are less awful  
far

Than are the tears of this human-  
ity,

That sound, in dropping, through  
Eternity,

Heard in God's ear beyond the  
furthest star.

If that be true, — the hereditary hate  
Of Love's lost Rebel, since the  
worlds began, —

The very Fiend, in hating, honors  
Man:

Flattering with Devil-homage Man's  
estate.

If two Eternities, at strife for us,  
Around each human soul wage  
silent war,

Dare we disdain ourselves, though  
fall'n we are,

With Hell and Heaven looking on  
us thus?

Whom God hath loved, whom Dev-  
ils dare not scorn,

Despise not thou, — the meanest  
human creature.

Climb, if thou canst, the heights  
of thine own nature,

And look toward Paradise where  
each was born.

So I spread sackcloth on my former  
pride:

And sat down, clothed and cover-  
ed up with shame:

And cried to God to take away my  
blame

Among my brethren: and to these  
I cried

To come between my crime and my  
despair,

That they might help my heart up,  
When God sent

Upon my soul its proper punish-  
ment,

Lest that should be too great for me  
to bear.

And so I made my choice: and  
learned to live

Again, and worship, as my spirit  
yearned:

So much had been admired — so  
much been learned —

So much been given me — O, how  
much to give!

Here is the choice, and now the  
time, O chooser!

Endless the consequence though  
brief the choice.

Echoes are waked down ages by  
thy voice:

Speak: and be thou the gainer or  
the loser.

And I bethought me long . . .

“Though garners split,

If none but thou be fed art thou  
more full?”

For surely Knowledge and the  
Beautiful

Are human; must have love, or die  
for it!

To Give is better than to Know or  
See:

And both are means: and neither  
is the end:

Knowing and seeing, if none call  
thee friend,

Beauty and knowledge have done  
naught for thee.

Though I at Aphroditē all day long  
Gaze until sunset with a thirsty  
eye,  
I shall not drain her boundless  
beauty dry  
By that wild gaze: nor do her fair  
face wrong.

For who gives, giving, doth win  
back his gift:  
And knowledge by division grows  
to more:  
Who hides the Master's talent  
shall die poor,  
And starve at last of his own thank-  
less thrift.

I did this for another: and, behold!  
My work hath blood in it: but  
thine hath none:  
Done for thyself, it dies in being  
done:  
To what thou buyest thou thyself  
art sold.

Give thyself utterly away. Be lost.  
Choose some one, some thing: not  
thyself, thine own:  
Thou canst not perish: but, thrice  
greater grown, —  
Thy gain the greatest where thy loss  
was most, —

Thou in another shalt thyself new-  
find.  
The single globule, lost in the wide  
sea,  
Becomes an ocean. Each iden-  
tity  
Is greatest in the greatness of its  
kind.

Who serves for gain, a slave, by  
thankless self  
Is paid; who gives himself is  
priceless, free.  
I give myself, a man, to God: lo,  
He  
Renders me back a saint unto my-  
self!

## NIGHT.

COME to me, not as once thou  
camest, Night!  
With light and splendor up the  
gorgeous West;  
Easing the heart's rich sense of  
thee with sighs  
Sobbed out of all emotion on  
Love's breast;  
While the dark world waned wav-  
ering into rest,  
Half seen athwart the dim delicious  
light  
Of languid eyes:

But softly, soberly; and dark —  
more dark!  
Till my life's shadow lose itself  
in thine.  
Athwart the light of slowly-  
gathering tears,  
That come between me and the  
starlight, shine  
From distant melancholy deeps  
divine,  
While day slips downward through  
a rosy arc  
To other spheres.

## SONG.

FLOW, freshly flow,  
Dark stream, below!  
While stars grow light above:  
By willowy banks, through lonely  
downs,  
Past terraced walls in silent towns,  
And bear me to my love!  
Still, as we go,  
Blow, gently blow,  
Warm wind, and blithely move  
These dreamy sails, that slowly  
glide, —  
A shadow on the shining tide  
That bears me to my love.  
Fade, sweetly fade  
In dewy shade  
On lonely grange and grove,  
O lingering day! and bring the  
night

Through all her milk-white mazes  
bright  
That tremble o'er my love.

The sunset wanes  
From twinkling panes.  
Dim, misty myriads move  
Down glimmering streets. One light  
I see—  
One happy light, that shines for me,  
And lights me to my love!

## FORBEARANCE.

CALL me not, Love, unthankful or  
unkind,  
That I have left my heart with  
thee, and fled.  
I were not worth that wealth which  
I resigned,  
Had I not chosen poverty instead.

Grant me but solitude! I dare not  
swerve  
From my soul's law,—a slave,  
though serving thee.  
I but forbear more grandly to de-  
serve:  
The free gift only cometh of the  
free.

## HELIOS HYPERIONIDES.

HELIOS all day long his allotted  
labor pursues;  
No rest to his passionate heart and  
his panting horses given,  
From the moment when roseate-fin-  
gered Eos kindles the dews  
And spurns the salt sea-floors,  
ascending silvery the heaven,  
Until from the hand of Eos Hesperos,  
trembling, receives  
His fragrant lamp, and faint in the  
twilight hangs it up.  
Then the over-wearied son of Hyper-  
ion lightly leaves  
His dusty chariot, and softly slips  
into his golden cup:  
And to holy Æthiopia, under the  
ocean-stream,

Back from the sunken retreats of  
the sweet Hesperides,  
Leaving his unloved labor, leaving  
his unyoked team,  
He sails to his much-loved wife;  
and stretches his limbs at ease  
In a laurelled lawn divine, on a bed  
of beaten gold,  
Where he pleasantly sleeps, forget-  
ting his travel by lands and seas,  
Till again the clear-eyed Eos comes  
with a finger cold,  
And again, from his white wife  
severed, Hyperionides  
Leaps into his flaming chariot,  
angrily gathers the reins,  
Headlong flings his course through  
Uranos, much in wrath,  
And over the seas and mountains,  
over the rivers and plains,  
Chafed at heart, tumultuous,  
pushes his burning path.

## ELISABETTA SIRANI.

1665.

JUST to begin,—and end! so much,—  
no more!  
To touch upon the very point at  
last  
Where life should cling: to feel the  
solid shore  
Safe; where, the seething sea's  
strong toil o'erpast,  
Peace seemed appointed; then, with  
all the store  
Half-undivulged of the gleaned  
ocean cast,  
Like a discouraged wave's on the  
bleak strand,  
Where what appeared some temple  
(whose glad Priest  
To gather ocean's sparkling gift  
should stand,  
Bidding the wearied wave, from  
toil releast,  
Sleep in the marble harbors bathed  
with bland  
And quiet sunshine, flowing from  
full east

Among the laurels) proves the dull  
 blind rock's  
 Fantastic front, — to die, a disal-  
 lowed,  
 Dasht purpose: which the scornful  
 shore-cliff mocks,  
 Even as it sinks; and all its  
 wealth bestowed  
 In vain, — mere food to feed, per-  
 chance, stray flocks  
 Of the coarse sea-gull! weaving its  
 own shroud  
 Of idle foam, swift ceasing to be  
 seen!  
 — Sad, sad, my father! . . . yet it  
 comes to this.  
 For I am dying. All that might  
 have been —  
 That must have been! . . . the  
 days, so hard to miss,  
 So sure to come! . . . eyes, lips,  
 that seemed to lean [kiss  
 In on me at my work, and almost  
 The curls bowed o'er it, . . . lost!  
 O, never doubt  
 I should have lived to know them  
 all again,  
 And from the crowd of praisers  
 single out  
 For special love those forms be-  
 held so plain  
 Beforehand. When my pictures,  
 borne about  
 Bologna, to the church doors, led  
 their train [go,  
 Of kindling faces, turned, as by they  
 Up to these windows, — standing  
 at your side  
 Unseen, to see them, I (be sure!)  
 should know  
 And welcome back those eyes and  
 lips, desried  
 Long since in fancy: for I loved  
 them so,  
 And so believed them! Think!  
 . . . Bologna's pride  
 My paintings! . . . Guido Reni's  
 mantle mine . . .  
 And I, the maiden artist, prized  
 among

The masters, . . . ah, that dream  
 was too divine  
 For earth to realize! I die so  
 young,  
 All this escapes me! God, the gift  
 be Thine,  
 Not man's then . . . better so!  
 That throbbing throng  
 Of human faces fades out fast. Even  
 yours,  
 Belovéd ones, the inexorable Fate  
 (For all our vowed affections!) scarce  
 endures [late  
 About me. Must I go, then, deso-  
 Out from among you? Nay, my  
 work insures  
 Fit guerdon somewhere, — though  
 the gift must wait!  
 Had I lived longer, life would sure  
 have set  
 Earth's gift of fame in safety. But  
 I die.  
 Death must make safe the heavenly  
 guerdon yet.  
 I trusted time for immortality, —  
 There was my error! Father, never  
 let  
 Doubt of reward confuse my  
 memory!  
 Besides, — I have done much: and  
 what is done  
 Is well done. All my heart con-  
 ceived, my hand  
 Made fast . . . mild martyr, saint,  
 and weeping nun,  
 And truncheoned prince, and war-  
 rior with bold brand,  
 Yet keep my life upon them; — as  
 the sun,  
 Though fallen below the limits of  
 the land,  
 Still sees on every form of purple  
 cloud  
 His painted presence.

Flaring August's here,  
 September's coming! Summer's  
 broidered shroud  
 Is borne away in triumph by the  
 year:

Red Autumn drops, from all his  
 branches bowed,  
 His careless wealth upon the costly  
 bier.  
 We must be cheerful. Set the case-  
 ment wide.  
 One last look o'er the places I have  
 loved,  
 One last long look! . . . Bologna, O  
 my pride  
 Among thy palaced streets! The  
 days have moved  
 Pleasantly o'er us. What has been  
 denied  
 To our endeavor? Life goes un-  
 reproved.  
 To make the best of all things, is the  
 best  
 Of all means to be happy. This I  
 know,  
 But cannot phrase it finely. The  
 night's rest  
 The day's toil sweetens. Flowers  
 are warmed by snow.  
 All's well God wills. Work out this  
 grief. Joy's zest  
 Itself is salted with a touch of  
 woe.  
 There's nothing comes to us may  
 not be borne,  
 Except a too great happiness. But  
 this  
 Comes rarely. Though I know that  
 you will mourn  
 The little maiden helpmate you  
 must miss,  
 Thanks be to God, I leave you not  
 forlorn.  
 There should be comfort in this  
 dying kiss. [self.  
 Let Barbara keep my colors for her-  
 I'm sorry that Lucia went away  
 In some unkindness. 'Twas a  
 cheerful elf!  
 Send her my scarlet ribands,  
 mother; say  
 I thought of her. My palette's on  
 the shelf,  
 Surprised, no doubt, at such long  
 holiday.

In the south window, on the easel,  
 stands  
 My picture for the Empress Eleä-  
 nore,  
 Still wanting some few touches, these  
 weak hands  
 Must leave to others. Yet there's  
 time before  
 The year ends. And the Empress'  
 own commands  
 You'll find in writing. Barbara's  
 brush is more  
 Like mine than Anna's; let her  
 finish it.  
 O, . . . and there's 'Maso, our  
 poor fisherman!  
 You'll find my work done for him -  
 something fit  
 To hang among his nets; you  
 liked the plan  
 My fancy took to please our friend's  
 dull wit,  
 Scarce brighter than his old tin  
 fishing-can. . . . [sail,  
 St. Margaret, stately as a ship full  
 Leading a dragon by an azure  
 band;  
 The ribbon flutters gayly in the gale;  
 The monster follows the Saint's  
 guiding hand,  
 Wrinkled to one grim smile from  
 head to tail;  
 For in his horny hide his heart  
 grows bland.  
 — Where are you, dear ones? . . .  
 'Tis the dull, faint chill,  
 Which soon will shrivel into burn-  
 ing pain!  
 Dear brother, sisters, father, mother,  
 — still  
 Stand near me! While your faces  
 fixt remain  
 Within my sense, vague fears of un-  
 known ill  
 Are softly crowded out, . . . and  
 yet, 'tis vain!  
 Greet Giulio Banzi; greet Antonio;  
 greet [gone,  
 Bartolomeo, kindly. When I'm

And in the school-room, as of old,  
you meet,

— Ah, yes! you'll miss a certain,  
merry tone,

A cheerful face, a smile that should  
complete

The vague place in the household  
picture grown

To an aspect so familiar, it seems  
strange

That aught should alter there.  
Mere life, at least,

Could not have brought the shadow  
of a change

Across it. Safely the warm years  
increase

Among us. I have never sought to  
range

From our small table at earth's  
general feast,

To higher places: never loved but  
you,

Dear family of friends, except my  
art:

Nor any form save those my pencil  
drew

E'er quivered in the quiet of my  
heart.

I die a maiden to Madonna true,  
And would have so continued. . . .

There, the smart,

The pang, the faintness! . . .

Ever, as I lie

Here, with the Autumn sunset on  
my face,

And heavy in my curls (whilst it,  
and I,

Together, slipping softly from the  
place

We played in, pensively prepare to  
die),

A low warm humming simmers  
in my ears,

— Old Summer afternoons! faint  
fragments rise

Out of my broken life . . . at  
time appears [skies:

Madonna-like a moon in mellow  
The three Fates with a spindle

and the shears:

The Grand Duke Cosmo with the  
Destinies:

St. Margaret with her dragon: fit-  
ful cheers

Along the Via Urbana come and go:  
Bologna with her towers! . . .

Then all grows dim,

And shapes itself anew, softly and  
slow,

To cloistered glooms through  
which the silver hymn

Eludes the sensitive silence; whilst  
below

The southwest window, just one  
single, slim,

And sleepy sunbeam, powders with  
waved gold

A lane of gleamy mist along the  
gloom,

Whereby to find its way, through  
manifold [tomb,

Magnificence, to Guido Reni's  
Which, set in steadfast splendor, I

behold.

And all the while, I scent the in-  
cense fume,

Till dizzy grows the brain, and dark  
the eye

Beneath the eyelid. When the  
end is come,

There, by his tomb (our master's) let  
me lie,

Somewhere, not too far off; be-  
neath the dome

Of our own Lady of the Rosary;

Safe, where old friends will pass;  
and still near home!

## LAST WORDS.

WILL, are you sitting and watching there yet? And I know, by a certain skill

That grows out of utter wakefulness, the night must be far spent, Will :  
For, lying awake so many a night, I have learned at last to catch  
From the crowing cock, and the clanging clock, and the sound of the  
beating watch,

A misty sense of the measureless march of Time, as he passes here,  
Leaving my life behind him ; and I know that the dawn is near.  
But you have been watching three nights, Will, and you look so wan to-  
night,

I thought, as I saw you sitting there, in the sad monotonous light  
Of the moody night-lamp near you, that I could not choose but close  
My lids as fast, and lie as still, as though I lay in a doze :  
For, I thought, "He will deem I am dreaming, and then he may steal  
away,

And sleep a little : and this will be well." And truly, I dreamed, as I lay  
Wide awake, but all as quiet, as though, the last office done,  
They had streaked me out for the grave, Will, to which they will bear me  
anon.

Dreamed ; for old things and places came dancing about my brain,  
Like ghosts that dance in an empty house ; and my thoughts went slipping  
again

By green back-ways forgotten to a stiller circle of time,  
Where violets, faded forever, seemed blowing as once in their prime :  
And I fancied that you and I, Will, were boys again as of old.  
At dawn on the hill-top together, at eve in the field by the fold ;  
Till the thought of this was growing too wildly sweet to be borne,  
And I opened my eyes, and turned me round, and there, in the light for-  
lorn,

I find you sitting beside me. But the dawn is at hand, I know.  
Sleep a little. I shall not die to-night. You may leave me. Go.  
Eh ! is it time for the drink ? must you mix it ? it does me no good.  
But thanks, old friend, true friend ! I would live for your sake, if I could.  
Ay, there are some good things in life, that fall not away with the rest.  
And, of all best things upon earth, I hold that a faithful friend is the  
best.

For woman, Will, is a thorny flower : it breaks, and we bleed and smart :  
The blossom falls at the fairest, and the thorn runs into the heart.  
And woman's love is a bitter fruit ; and, however he bite it, or sip,  
There's many a man has lived to curse the taste of that fruit on his lip.  
But never was any man yet, as I ween, be he whosoever he may,  
That has known what a true friend is, Will, and wished that knowledge  
away.

You were proud of my promise, faithful despite of my fall,  
Sad when the world seemed over sweet, sweet when the world turned  
gall :

When I cloaked myself in the pride of praise from what God grieved to see,

You saw through the glittering lie of it all, and silently mourned for me :  
When the world took back what the world had given, and scorn with  
praise changed place,

I, from my sackcloth and ashes, looked up, and saw hope glow on your  
face :

Therefore, fair weather be yours, Will, whether it shines or pours,  
And, if I can slip from out of my grave, my spirit will visit yours.

O woman eyes that have smiled and smiled, O woman lips that have kist  
The life-blood out of my heart, why thus forever do you persist,  
Pressing out of the dark all round, to bewilder my dying hours  
With your ghostly sorceries brewed from the breath of your poison-  
flowers ?

Still, though the idol be broken, I see at their ancient revels,  
The riven altar around, come dancing the self-same devils.

*Lente currite, lente currite, noctis equi !*

Linger a little, O Time, and let me be saved ere I die.

How many a night 'neath her window have I walked in the wind and  
rain,

Only to look at her shadow fleet over the lighted pane.

Alas ! 'twas the shadow that rested, 'twas herself that fled, you see,

And now I am dying, I know it :—dying, and where is she !

Dancing divinely, perchance, or, over her soft harp strings,

Using the past to give pathos to the little new song that she sings.

Bitter ? I dare not be bitter in the few last hours left to live.

Needing so much forgiveness, God grant me at least to forgive.

There can be no space for the ghost of her face down in the narrow  
room,

And the mole is blind, and the worm is mute, and there must be rest in  
the tomb.

And just one failure more or less to a life that seems to be

(Whilst I lie looking upon it, as a bird on the broken tree

She hovers about, ere making wing for a land of lovelier growth,

Brighter blossom, and purer air, somewhere far off in the south,)

Failure, crowning failure, failure from end to end,

Just one more or less, what matter, to the many no grief can mend ?

Not to know vice is virtue, not fate, however men rave :

And, next to this I hold that man to be but a coward and slave

Who bears the plague-spot about him, and, knowing it, shrinks or fears

To brand it out, though the burning knife should hiss in his heart's hot  
tears.

But I have caught the contagion of a world that I never loved,

Pleased myself with approval of those that I never approved,

Paltered with pleasures that pleased not, and fame where no fame could  
be,

And how shall I look, do you think, Will, when the angels are looking  
on me ?

Yet oh ! the confident spirit once mine, to dare and to do !

Take the world into my hand, and shape it, and make it anew :

Gather all men in my purpose, men in their darkness and dearth,

Men in their meanness and misery, made of the dust of the earth.



Mould them afresh, and make out of them Man, with his spirit sublime,  
 Man, the great heir of Eternity, dragging the conquests of Time!  
 Therefore I mingled among them, deeming the poet should hold  
 All natures saved in his own, as the world in the ark was of old;  
 All natures saved in his own to be types of a nobler race,  
 When the old world passeth away, and the new world taketh his place.  
 Triple fool in my folly! purblind and impotent worm,  
 Thinking to move the world, who could not myself stand firm!  
 Cheat of a worn-out trick, as one that on shipboard roves  
 Wherever the wind may blow, still deeming the continent moves!  
 Blowing the frothy bubble of life's brittle purpose away;  
 Child, ever chasing the morrow, who now cannot ransom a day:  
 Still I called Fame to lead onward, forgetting she follows behind  
 Those who know whither they walk through the praise or dispraise of  
 mankind.

All my life (looking back on it) shows like the broken stair  
 That winds round a ruined tower, and never will lead anywhere.  
 Friend, lay your hand in my own, and swear to me, when you have seen  
 My body borne out from the door, ere the grass on my grave shall be  
 green,  
 You will burn every book I have written. And so perish, one and all,  
 Each trace of the struggle that failed with the life that I cannot recall.  
 Dust and ashes, earth's dross, which the mattock may give to the mole!  
 Something, though stained and defaced, survives, as I trust, with the  
 soul.

Something? . . . Ay, something comes back to me . . . Think! that I  
 might have been . . . what?

Almost, I fancy at times, what I meant to have been, and am not.  
 Where was the fault? Was it strength fell short? And yet (I can speak  
 of it now!)

How my spirit sung like the resonant nerve of a warrior's battle-bow  
 When the shaft has leapt from the string, what time, her first bright ban-  
 ner unfurled,

Song aimed her arrowy purpose in me sharp at the heart of the world.  
 Was it the hand that faltered, unskilled? or was it the eye that deceived?  
 However I reason it out, there remains a failure time has not retrieved.  
 I said I would live in all lives that beat, and love in all loves that be:  
 I would crown me lord of all passions; and the passions were lords of me,  
 I would compass every circle, I would enter at every door,  
 In the starry spiral of science, and the labyrinth of lore,  
 Only to follow the flying foot of love to his last retreat.  
 Fool! that with man's all-imperfect would circumscribe God's all-com-  
 plete!

Arrogant error! whereby I starved like the fool in the fable of old,  
 Whom the gods destroyed by the gift he craved, turning all things to gold,  
 Be wise: know what to leave unknown. The flowers bloom on the brink,  
 But black death lurks at the bottom. Help men to enjoy, not to think,  
 O poet to whom I give place! eul the latest effect, leave the cause.  
 Few that dive for the pearl of the deep but are crushed in the kraken's jaws.

While the harp of Arion is heard at eve over the glimmering ocean :  
 He floats in the foam, on the dauphin's back, gliding with gentle motion,  
 Over the rolling water, under the light of the beaming star,  
 And the nymphs, half asleep on the surface, sail moving his musical car  
 A little knowledge will turn youth gray. And I stood, chill in the sun,  
 Naming you each of the roses; blest by the beauty of none.  
 My song had an after-savor of the salt of many tears,  
 Or it burned with a bitter foretaste of the end as it now appears :  
 And the world that had paused to listen awhile, because the first notes  
 were gay,

Passed on its way with a sneer and a smile : " Has he nothing fresher to say?  
 This poet's mind was a weedy flower that presently comes to naught!"  
 For the world was not so sad but what my song was sadder, it thought.  
 Comfort me not. For if aught be worse than failure from over-stress  
 Of a life's prime purpose, it is to sit down content with a little success.  
 Talk not of genius baffled. Genius is master of man.

Genius does what it must, and talent does what it can.  
 Blot out my name, that the spirits of Shakespeare and Milton and Burns  
 Look not down on the praises of fools with a pity my soul yet spurns.  
 And yet, had I only the trick of an aptitude shrewd of its kind,  
 I should have lived longer, I think, more merry of heart and of mind.  
 Surely I knew (who better?) the innermost secret of each  
 Bird, and beast, and flower. Failed I to give to them speech?  
 All the pale spirits of storm, that sail down streams of the wind,  
 Cleaving the thunder-cloud, with wild hair blowing behind;  
 All the soft seraphs that float in the light of the crimson eve,  
 When Hesper begins to glitter, and the heavy woodland to heave :  
 All the white nymphs of the water that dwell 'mid the lilies alone :  
 And the buskined maids for the love of whom the hoary oak-trees groan;  
 They came to my call in the forest; they crept to my feet from the river :  
 They softly looked out of the sky when I sung, and their wings beat with  
 breathless endeavor

The blocks of the broken thunder piling their stormy lattices,  
 Over the moaning mountain walls, and over the sobbing seas.  
 So many more reproachful faces around my bed!  
 Voices moaning about me : " Ah! couldst thou not heed what we said?"  
 Peace to the past! it skills not now: these thoughts that vex it in vain  
 Are but the dust of a broken purpose blown about the brain  
 Which presently will be tenantless, when the wanton worms carouse,  
 And the mole builds over my bones his little windowless house.  
 It is growing darker and stranger, Will, and colder, — dark and cold,  
 Dark and cold! Is the lamp gone out? Give me thy hand to hold.  
 No: 'tis life's brief candle burning down. Tears? tears, Will! Why,  
 This which we call dying is only ceasing to die.  
 It is but the giving over a game all lose. Fear life, not death.  
 The hard thing was to live, Will. To whatever bourn this breath  
 Is going, the way is easy now. With flowers and music, life,  
 Like a pagan sacrifice, leads us along to this dark High Priest with the  
 knife

I have been too peevish at mere mischance. For whether we build it,  
 friend,

Of brick or jasper, life's large base dwindles into this point at the end,  
A kind of nothing! Who knows whether 'tis fittest to weep or laugh  
At those thin curtains the spider spins o'er each dusty epitaph?  
I talk wildly. But this I know, that not even the best and first,  
When all is done, can claim by desert what even to the last and worst  
Of us weak workmen, God from the depth of his infinite mercy giveth.  
These bones shall rest in peace, for I know that my Redeemer liveth.  
Doubtful images come and go; and I seem to be passing them by.  
Bubbles these be of the mind, which show that the stream is hurrying nigh  
To the home of waters. Already I feel, in a sort of still sweet awe,  
The great main current of all that I am beginning to draw and draw  
Into perfect peace. I attain at last! life's a long, long reaching out  
Of the soul to something beyond her. Now comes the end of all doubt.  
The vanishing point in the picture! I have uttered weak words to-night,  
And foolish. A thousand failures, what are these in the sight  
Of the One All-Perfect who, whether man falls in his work, or succeeds,  
Builds surely, solemnly up from our broken days and deeds  
The infinite purpose of time. We are but day-laborers all,  
Early or late, or first or last at the gate in the vineyard wall.  
Lord! if, in love, though fainting oft, I have tended thy gracious Vine,  
O, quench the thirst on these dying lips, Thou, who pourest the wine!  
Hush! I am in the way to study a long, long silence now.  
I know at last what I cannot tell: I see what I may not show.  
Pray awhile for my soul. Then sleep. There is nothing in this to fear.  
I shall sleep into death. Night sleeps. The hoarse wolf howls not near,  
No dull owl beats the casement, and no rough bearded star  
Stares on my mild departure from yon dark window bar.  
Nature takes no notice of those that are coming or going.  
To-morrow make ready my grave, Will. To-morrow new flowers will be  
blowing.

## AFTER PARADISE.

### THE TITLARK'S NEST.

#### A PARABLE.

"Introite, nam et huic deii sunt."

—APUD GELLIUM.

#### 1.

WHERE o'er his azure birthplace still  
the smile  
Of sweet Apollo kindles golden  
hours,  
High on the white peak of a glitter-  
ing isle  
A ruin'd fane within a wild vine's  
bowers  
Muffled its marble-pillar'd peristyle;  
As under curls, that clasp in frolic  
showers  
A young queen's brow, her antique  
diadem's  
Stern grandeur hides its immemorial  
gems.

#### 2.

The place was solitary, and the fane  
Deserted save that where, in saucy  
scorn  
Of desolation's impotent disdain,  
The revelling leaves and buds and  
bunches born  
From that wild vine along a roof-  
less lane  
Of mouldering marble columns  
roam'd, one morn  
A titlark, by past grandeur unop-  
prest,  
Had boldly built her inconspicuous  
nest.

#### 3.

And there where girt by priests and  
devotees  
A god once gazed upon the sup-  
pliant throng,  
Wild foliage waved by every wan-  
dering breeze  
Now shelter'd one small bird; to  
whose lone song,  
Companion'd by no choral minstrel-  
sies,  
An agèd shepherd listen'd all day  
long.  
Unlearn'd the listener and untaught  
the lay,  
But blithe were both in their in-  
stinctive way.

#### 4.

Thither once came a traveller who  
had read  
Marcus Vitruvius Pollio, and had  
all  
The terms of architecture in his  
head,  
Apophyge, and plinth, and astral-  
gal.  
He, from below, had in its leafy bed  
Spied out the carcass of an antique  
wall,  
Keen as, from heaven, the hovering  
condor spies  
Where, in the pampas hid, a dead  
horse lies.

#### 5.

"Pelasgian? Nought doth old Pau-  
sanias say

About this ruin, and I find no plan  
Or note of it in learn'd Caylus; nay,  
I doubt not it was miss'd by  
Winckelmann.  
The prize is mine. No joke, this  
hot noon-day,  
To climb yon hill! But Science  
leads the van  
Of Enterprise; and now's the chance  
to shame  
The English Elgin's cheaply-pur-  
chased fame.

## 6.

"Ho, you there, yonder in the  
bramble-bush!"

The tired explorer to the shep-  
herd cried,

"A drachma for thy guidance,  
friend!" But "Hush!"

The grey-hair'd herdsman of the  
hills replied.

Then, pointing upward to the leaf-  
age lush

That rippled round the ruin'd fane,  
with pride

He added "Hark, where yonder  
leaves are swinging,

The god's voice from his sanctuary  
singing!"

## 7.

The traveller laugh'd. "'Tis a  
*curruca* small,

The *Orphea*, I surmise, whose  
note we hear.

Her nest is haply in yon temple wall.

An earlier songstress she, and  
sings more clear,

Than her small northern cousin  
whom we call

*Atricapilla Sylvia*. But I fear,

My worthy friend, we must not  
deem divine

Each vagrant voice that issues from  
a shrine."

## 8.

"Yet," said the old man, with a  
pensive smile,

"I heard my mother tell when I  
was young

(And she, Sir, was a daughter of  
this isle)

How everything that's here had  
once a tongue,

In the old times. Myself, too, many  
a while

Have heard the streamlets sing-  
ing many a song,

And, tho' their language was un-  
known to me,

The reeds were moved by it, as I  
could see.

## 9.

"Sir, when I was a boy I pastured  
here

My father's goats which now, Sir,  
are mine own.

For he is underground this many a  
year,

But he had lived his life, and  
Heaven hath shown

Much goodness to us, and my chil-  
dren dear

Are all grown up; and, nursing  
here alone,

Oft have I wonder'd 'Could this  
temple break

Long silence, in what language  
would it speak?'

## 10.

"Full sure was I that if it spoke  
to me,

Whate'er its language, I should  
understand.

Then, I was young: and now, tho'  
old I be,

When sweet in heaven above the  
silent land

That voice I hear, my soul feels  
glad and free,

And I am fain to bless the god's  
command,

With welcome prompt responding  
to the voice  
He sends from heaven to bid my  
heart rejoice.

## 11.

“ Ah, not in vain its message have  
I heard!  
And, Sir, tho’ it may be, as you  
aver,

The voice comes only from a little  
bird,

Whose name, indeed, I never  
heard of, Sir,  
And tho’ I doubt not aught by you  
averr’d,

For you, Sir, seem a learnèd  
traveller,  
Yet still the temple that contains  
the song  
A temple is, and doth to God belong.

## 12.

“ And haply to the little bird I hear  
He may have said, ‘ I am myself  
too high

For this poor man. Speak to him  
thou, speak clear,

And tell him, little bird, that he  
may lie

On consecrated ground and have  
no fear,

But listen to thy messages, and  
try

To understand.’ And I have under-  
stood,

For when I listen, Sir, it does me  
good.”

## 13.

“ Humph!” said the traveller,  
“ Worthy friend, live long

Ere yet thy children lay thee un-  
derground!

Pasture thy goats in peace, and may  
the song

Of many a titlark make thee  
pleasant sound,  
Warbled all day thy cottage eaves  
among.

Such simple songs where simple  
hearts abound  
Fit place may find, but not in halls  
where hoar  
Poseidon haply held high state of  
yore.”

## 14.

“ Ay, Sir, it is but right,” the old  
shepherd said,

“ The little bird should to the  
god give place

Whenever he returns. But where  
is fled

The sacred Presence that once  
deign’d to grace

These lonesome haunts so long un-  
tenanted?

Roam where you will, the sanc-  
tuaried space

Is vacant, voiceless, priestless, un-  
possest,

Save for the bird that in it builds  
her nest.

## 15.

“ Yet into this dead temple’s heart  
hath flown

A voice of life, and this else-  
silent shrine

The bird whose nest is built in it  
hath known

How to make vocal. Thro’ the  
trembling vine

Hark, the fresh carol! ‘Till to claim  
his own

The god returns in all his power  
divine,

Still unforbidden let me hail the  
strain

That haunts with living song the  
lifeless fane.”

# LEGENDS OF EXILE.

## FIRST SERIES. — MAN AND WOMAN.

“Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels.” — PSALM viii.

### I.

#### THE LEGEND OF POETRY.

ADAM and Eve, cast out of Paradise,  
Wander'd along the wilderness for-  
lorn,

Till all its unfamiliar sands and skies  
Were one dim solitude without a  
bourne.

Then Eve, outwearied, sank upon  
the ground;  
And, where she fell, motionless she  
remain'd.

Adam had climb'd a little barren  
mound

A few steps farther. There he  
stood, and strain'd

His backward gaze to the forbidden  
bound

Of Eden. Still their banisht lord  
could see,

Though faint in fading light, the  
happy bowers

Where nevermore his fallen mate  
and he

Might roam or rest, renewing grief-  
less hours;

And Adam groan'd.

Meanwhile, unheard, unview'd,  
Jehovah's arm'd Archangel, from  
the gate

He had shut forever, adown the  
solitude

And darkness of that world all deso-  
late

The footsteps of the fugitives pur-  
sued.

Sudden he stood by Adam's side,  
and said,

“Man, thou hast far to go. It is  
not good

To look behind thee. Forward turn  
thy head!

Thither thy way lies.” And the  
man replied

“I cannot.” “What thou canst  
thou knowest not,”

The Archangel answer'd, “for thou  
hast not tried. [lot,

But trial is henceforth Man's earthly  
And what he *must* he *can* do.” Adam

cried

“What must I?” “Thou hast set  
aside God's word,

But canst not,” said the Angel, “set  
aside

Necessity; whose bidding, tho' ab-  
horr'd,

Obeys thou must.” And Adam ask'd  
in awe

“Is then Necessity another Lord?”  
The Angel answer'd “'Tis another  
Law.”

“Another Law! But me thy sweep-  
ing sword

Hath left not,” Adam mutter'd,  
“hap what may,

Another Paradise to forfeit still.  
What if that other Law I disobey?”

“Thou canst not,” sigh'd the Seraph,  
“for thy will

Hath lost its freedom, which was  
yesterday

A part of Paradise. For good or ill  
Necessity controls it. Wretch, thou  
art

Wearily already, and thou fain  
wouldst sleep,

Yet sleep thou dost not, tho' thine  
eyelids smart

With the unwilling vigil they must  
 keep ;  
 'Tis thy necessity to think and wake.  
 To-morrow, thou wouldst wake and  
 think. In vain !  
 Slumber unwill'd thy thoughts shall  
 overtake,  
 And sleep thou shalt, tho' sleep thou  
 wouldst not. Pain  
 Thou wouldst avoid, yet pain shall  
 be thy lot.  
 Thou wouldst go forth — Necessity  
 forbids,  
 Chains fast thy weakness to one  
 hated spot,  
 And on thy shut wish locks her iron  
 lids.  
 Thou wouldst know one thing, yet  
 shalt know it not.  
 Thou wouldst be ignorant of another  
 thing,  
 Yet canst not choose but know it.  
 Unforgot  
 To thy reluctant memory shall cling  
 What thou wouldst fain forget, for-  
 gotten fleet  
 From foil'd remembrance on evasive  
 wing  
 What thou wouldst fain remember.  
 Change or cheat  
 Necessity, thou canst not."

Shuddering

Adam crouch'd low at the Arch-  
 angel's feet,  
 And cried " Whate'er I *must* be, and  
 whate'er  
 I *can* be, aid, O aid me, to forget  
 What I no longer *may* be! Even  
 this bare  
 Inhospitable wilderness might yet  
 To unremembering eyes seem all as  
 fair  
 As Eden's self, nor should I more  
 repine [pare."  
 Were I once more unable to com-  
 " Poor wretch," the Angel said,  
 " wouldst thou resign  
 All that remains to thee of Para-  
 dise?"

" Of Paradise is anything still mine?"  
 Sigh'd Adam, and the Angel answer'd  
 " Yes,  
 The memory of it." " Thence," he  
 groan'd, " arise  
 My sharpest torments. I should  
 suffer less  
 If I could cease to miss what I sur-  
 vive."  
 " Wouldst thou the gift, then, of  
 forgetfulness?"  
 The Seraph ask'd. And Adam cried,  
 " Give! give!"

With looks uplift, that search'd the  
 deeps of heaven,  
 Silent the Angel stood, till, as it  
 were,  
 In response from the source of glory  
 given  
 To that seraphic gaze, which was a  
 prayer,  
 Reorient thro' the rifted dark, and  
 high  
 O'er Eden, rose the dawn of such a  
 day  
 As nevermore man's mourning eyes  
 shall bless  
 With beauty that hath wither'd from  
 his way,  
 And gladness that is gone beyond  
 his guess.  
 The panting Paradise beneath it lay  
 Beatified in the divine caress  
 Of its effulgence; and, with fervid  
 sigh,  
 All Eden's folded labyrinths open'd  
 wide  
 Abyss within abyss of loveliness. ▼  
 Thither the Archangel pointed, and  
 replied:  
 " Adam, once more look yonder!  
 Fix thine eye  
 Upon the guarded happiness denied  
 To the denial of its guardian law.  
 Contemperate thy lost Eden — the  
 last time!"

And Adam lifted up his face, and  
 saw



Far off the bowery lawns and blissful streams

Of Eden, fair as in his sinless prime,  
And fairer than to love forbidden seems

The long'd-for face whose lips in dreams requite

Adoring sighs that, save in passionate dreams,

Are disallow'd idolatries. Dark night

Elsewhere above the lifeless waste was spread,

As o'er a dead face the blindfolding pall.

"Seest thou thy sinless past?" the Angel said.

And Adam moan'd, "All, all! I see it all,

And know it mine no more!"

His helmèd head,

As in obedience to some high command

Deliver'd to him by no audible word,

The Archangel bow'd. Then, with decisive hand,

He seized and drew his formidable sword.

Thro' night's black bosom burn'd the plunging brand;

Two-edgèd fires, the lightnings of the Lord,

Flasht from its fervid blade, below, above,

And, where their brilliance thro' the darkness broke,

Clear from the zenith to the nadir clove

Man's sunder'd universe. At one dead stroke

The Archangelic sword had hewn in twain

The substance of Eternity.

There ran

The pang and shudder of a fierce surprise

Thro' Adam's soul; and then he slept again

As he had slept before, when he (likewise

In twain divided — Man and Woman) began

His double being.

Upon the night-bound plain,  
In two vast fragments, each a dim surmise,

Eternity had fallen — one part toward man,

The other part toward man's lost Paradise.

The light of Eden by its fall was crost,

And in its shadow vanisht — save one gleam

Of faintly-lingering glory that was lost

In Adam's slumber, and became — A Dream.

\* \* \* \* \*

Adam had lost his memory by the stroke

Of that celestial sword's transfixing flame,

And so forgot his dream when he awoke.

Yet did its unremember'd secret claim

Release from dull oblivion's daily yoke

In moments rare. He knew not whence they came,

Nor was it in his power to reinvoke

Their coming: but at times thro' all his frame

He felt them, like an inward voice that spoke

Of things which have on earth no utter'd name;

And sometimes like a sudden light they broke

Upon his darkest hours, and put to shame

His dull despondency, his fierce unrest,

His sordid toil, and miserable strife.

These rare brief moments Adam  
deem'd his best,  
And call'd them all THE POETRY OF  
LIFE.

## II.

## THE LEGEND OF MUSIC.

IN that dread instant when Eternity  
Was by the Angel's sword asunder  
riven,  
There sounded from the starry deep  
a cry  
That shook the constellated poles  
of heaven:

“Elohim! Elohim! what hast thou  
done,  
Whose sword hath hewn Eternity  
in twain?  
One part of it is now the Past, and  
one  
The Future (phantoms both, ex-  
empt from pain  
By lifeless unreality alone!)  
And the pang'd Present, like an  
open wound,  
Between them gapes, lest aught  
should close again  
What thou hast cloven.”

To this poignant sound  
The Seraph, leaning on his sword  
down-slanted,  
Listen'd, and in compassion or dis-  
dain  
Smiled gravely, as he murmur'd  
“It is well.  
The Reign of Time begins, man's  
prayer is granted.”

Then loud he call'd to the Abyss of  
Hell,  
“Stunn'd rebels, rouse your swoon-  
ing hosts, and rise,  
Tho' thunder-smitten, from the Pe-  
nal Pit!  
Time's ravageable realm wide open  
lies

For' your invasion, and the spoils  
of it

To you no more Eternity denies.  
Find in its painful fields your pas-  
ture fit,

Be every pulse of consciousness  
your prey,  
And chase the panting moment as  
it flies!”

Hell to the invocation answer'd  
“Yea!”

And, pour'd in surge on surge of  
flame-pulsed cries,

The fervid rush of her Infernal  
Powers

Sounded like roaring fire, tho' sight-  
less they

As midnight storms.

“Eternity is dead!

And Time, the quivering corpse of  
it, is ours!

And from Eternity's death-wound,”  
they said,

“Fast, fast, the life-drops fall—  
days, minutes, hours,

Drop after drop, with world on  
world, away—

Into the final nothingness at last!  
To-day sinks swooning into yester-  
day,

The future disappears into the past.  
Eternity lies lost in what hath been

And is no more, or in what is not  
yet;

For all the rest is but a sigh between  
A hovering fear and a forlorn re-  
gret.

And every moment but begins in  
vain

A world that is with every moment  
ended;

For broken is Eternity in twain,  
And never shall Eternity be mended.”

This sullen pæan waked, where'er  
it went

Around the rolling world, respon-  
sive sounds

Of wrath and pain; as if all pas-  
sions pent

In some titanic soul had burst the  
 bounds  
 Of individuality, and blent  
 Their personal essence with the  
 mindless might  
 Of universal forces. First, there  
 came  
 Ominous suspirations, tremours  
 slight  
 Of sleepy terror, from the shudder-  
 ing pores  
 And joints and sockets of earth's  
 giant frame;  
 Anon, Behemoth, bellowing, with  
 fierce roars  
 Shook all his chains. The moun-  
 tains, rack'd and pang'd  
 By earthquake, thunder'd from their  
 fiery cores;  
 From smitten crag to crag the cata-  
 racts clang'd;  
 The sharp rain hiss'd; the ocean  
 howl'd; the shores  
 Shriek'd; and the woods tumultu-  
 ously twang'd  
 Their wailing harps. But what was  
 felt and heard  
 Thro' all that uproar's dissonant  
 hurricane  
 Was not the inarticulate noise alone  
 Of winds and waves and woods and  
 mountains stirr'd  
 To screaming storm; there was a  
 mystic strain  
 Of spiritual agony, a tone  
 Of conscious torment, mingled with  
 the train  
 Of those unconscious sounds,—the  
 personal moan  
 Of some invisible being's passionate  
 pain.  
 Wild as the roar of an uprooted  
 world  
 Wrench'd from its orbit, round the  
 Dream of Man  
 This swarm of demon discords roll'd  
 and swirl'd.  
 Thro' Adam's slumber, as it hurtled  
 by,

Its sounds were scatter'd; and his  
 dream began  
 Dimly to shape beneath his sleep-  
 shut eye  
 Weird wavering images that were,  
 or seem'd,  
 The echoes of those sounds made  
 visible.  
 So that to Adam's soul the dream  
 he dream'd  
 Was even as if on some vast cur-  
 tain fell  
 Troops of stupendous shadows in  
 the glare  
 Shed o'er it from a mighty furnace,  
 lit  
 Behind the back of one who, to his  
 chair  
 Fast chain'd, with wistful eyes pe-  
 ruses it,  
 Wondering what sort of unseen  
 beings are those  
 Whose phantoms thro' the glory  
 come and go:  
 For of them nothing more the  
 watcher knows  
 Than the huge shadows they, in  
 passing, throw  
 Athwart the lurid curtain; nor  
 whence flows  
 The light those shadows darken,  
 doth he know.<sup>1</sup>

Still smiled the Seraph. Slow, in  
 circuit wide,  
 Around the sphere of Adam's dream  
 he drew  
 The solemn splendours of his sword,  
 and cried  
 "Thus far, no farther!" The In-  
 fernal Crew  
 In vain to storm that æry circle  
 tried,  
 And round it hoarse their grovel-  
 ling hubbub grew,  
 Reluctantly beginning to subside  
 In sullen howls and stifled bellow-  
 ings.

<sup>1</sup> Plato. — *Republic*. Book vii.

<p>Then cried the Angel, "Waken, also, you That slumber in the silence of sweet things, Voices of Consolation! and pursue From hour to hour with your fond welcomings That promise fair the fleeting hours renew! Come hither from the hidden heav- ens that are Your homes on earth! Come, with the south winds, hither From rosy kingdoms of the Vesper Star! Come, with the sunrise, from the golden ether! Come with the cushat's goodnight coo, from bowers Bathed in the tender dews of even- tide, Or with the hymn that to the matin hours The laverock sings in glory unes- pied! Ripple light music of the restless breeze Thro' murmurous haunts of sylvan oracles, And loose the secrets lisp'd by sum- mer seas Into the husht pink ears of blush- ing shells! Come, with remember'd sounds of warbling stream, And whispering bough, from wood- land cloisters! Come, Consolers! Enter here, and let the Dream That Man is dreaming be hence- forth your home!"</p> <p>To this appeal the answer linger'd long, And not a sound upon the darkness stirr'd Save the faint moanings of the De- mon Throng. But a strange note, not theirs, at length was heard,</p>	<p>A single timorous note of distant song, Like the first chirrup of a callow bird. Then, one by one, from here and there, arose Clear in the far-off stillness of the night (As from the bosom of the twilight grows Star after star) a multitude of light But thrilling tones, a choral har- mony Of silvery voices in symphonious scale; Whose heavenward anthem peal'd from sky to sky, As "Hail!" they sang, "Benignant Elohim, hail! The living soul of dead Eternity Thy rescuing sword hath free'd. From its dark prison Released at last, on pinions glorious Behold, that radiant Spirit is now arisen! And hark, how sweet the song it sings to us! How sweet the song, how fair the face! for fled The hovering frown erewhile its aspect wore, And lo, the frigid features of the dead Are flusht with spiritual life! No more Those eyes are cold, no more those lips are dumb, And 'Fear no more,' they sing, 'to gaze on me! Ye call'd me Fate when I was frozen numb In the cold silence of Eternity, And then ye fear'd me: but my liv- ing home Henceforth is in the hearts of all who live. Fear me no more, then, for to you I come With an eternal gift that shall sur- vive</p>
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Fate's despot rule o'er Time's brief  
horoscope :

Eternity is still the gift I give  
To all who trust me, and my name  
is Hope."

And "Ave! ave!" sang the Voices.  
"Thee

We welcome, holy Hope, that from  
afar

Dost bring the promise of sweet  
things to be,

Forever sweeter than all things that  
are!

Born flying, thy fair flight thou  
canst not stop,

But into the sad hearts it leaves  
behind

Thou dost, in passing, from thy  
pinions drop

One spotless plume that, cherisht,  
keeps in mind

The dear remembrance of its pas-  
sage. We,

What can we give thee in return  
for this?

Take at their best, to save them,  
take with thee

Our sweetest joys, our holiest hours;  
whose bliss,

To thy far kingdom borne away,  
shall be

Better and brighter, holier still, and  
higher!

Take also, Spirit of Eternity,  
What Time made ours, to make it  
thine — Desire!"

Closer and clearer the sweet Voices  
grew,

Borne floating on their own song's  
rhythmic stream,

Flutter'd round Adam's slumber,  
downward flew,

And settled in the bosom of his  
dream.

"Rest there, Consolers!" the Arch-  
angel said,

"And you, Disturbers, strive as you  
have striven,

And thou — dream on, poor Dream-  
er!"

Then he spread  
His spacious pinions, and return'd  
to heaven.

Out of the depths of Adam's dream,  
and clear

All round it, those Consoling Voi-  
ces pour'd

Pure strains of silver sound, that  
fill'd the sphere

Traced by the circuit of the Angel's  
sword.

The Demon Powers, resentful,  
roused again

Their turbulent cohorts to the  
overthrow

Of this melodious bulwark, but in  
vain;

For there Hell's surges broke, and  
hoarse below

Roll'd in tumultuary undertones  
Their weltering waves of passion

and of pain,  
Goaded and groaning, as the smit  
sea groans

When the storm's lash is on its  
livid mane.

Those sounds were heard in Heav-  
en; and, down the light

Of all the listening stars, celestial  
streams

Of song flow'd, mingling with the  
troubled flight

Of their fierce tones — as, while the  
torrent screams,

The calm moon, shining thro' a  
cloudless night,

Belts his tost bosom with her tran-  
quil beams.

And all these Voices, with the  
sounds that were

Their instrumental slaves, — the  
Voices sweet

Of Man's Consolers, hymning praise  
and prayer,

The Voices of the Passions of the  
Pit,

Earth's dread disturbers, clarions  
of despair,  
And the pure Voices of the Stars —  
contending  
With one another, pour'd the im-  
portunate tide  
Of their sonorous strife, in strains  
ascending  
Beyond the visible spheres, to where  
it sigh'd  
About the elemental boundary wall  
Which never, to the other unseen  
side,  
The swarming senses that man's  
soul enthrall  
May overpass. For shrouded there,  
serene  
And irresponsible to the strife of  
all  
The worlds of passion and of sense  
— unseen,  
Unheard — He dwells, Who is, and  
wills, and knows.  
And there, its clamour calm'd, its  
vehement play  
Of contradictions quench'd in the  
repose  
Of a sublime accord whose spacious  
sway  
Hush'd its wild course to an harmo-  
nious close,  
Slowly the sounding tumult died  
away.

So, when all storms are spent, and  
Ocean's sleep  
Leviathan's loud voice invades no  
more,  
The wearied winds into the silent  
deep  
Drop the last echoes of his dying  
roar,  
And fold their heavy wings, and  
faintly creep  
To rest on some lone island's desert  
shore;  
Where the huge billows in low  
waves subside,  
And the low waves in rippling shal-  
lows cease,

While the lull'd halcyon on the  
slumbrous tide  
Broods, and the breathing stillness  
whispers, "Peace!"

\* \* \* \* \*

When Adam waked, the sounds  
that in his dream  
Dream-woven forms had worn still  
haunted him.  
Not only to have heard them did he  
seem,  
But even to have seen them, in a  
dim  
Indefinite world that of life's earth-  
ly scheme  
The phantom protoplast appear'd.  
For there  
Some bliss beyond possession was  
the prize  
Relentless wrestlers strove to seize  
or share;  
And o'er a battle-field of boundless  
size  
Hope and Desire with Terror and  
Despair,  
And Love and Faith with Hate and  
Doubt, contended;  
Importunately rolling to and fro,  
In restless contradiction never  
ended,  
A Yes reverberated by a No.  
Infinite longing, infinite resistance,  
Infinite turmoil! gaining now, now  
losiug,  
And then again with passionate  
persistence  
Speeding the clamorous chase thro'  
vast, confusing,  
Inextricable mazes; but still ever,  
Beyond the strife of discords and  
the cry  
Of conflict, with inveterate endeav-  
our,  
Tending towards a far off harmony.

And MUSIC was the name the  
dreamer gave  
To that dream-world's mysterious  
sounds. In vain, [crave  
However, for long years did Adam

<p>To hear, in <i>this</i> world, <i>that</i> world's sounds again. And everywhere on earth he sought to find Or fashion images that might ex- press The echoes of them lingering in his mind, But nought resembled their myste- riousness.</p> <p>His sons grew up. Memorial words they wrote On sun-dried river-reeds in cunning rhymes, Or graved them on the rocks, that men might note Who went before them in the after times. He praised their scripture, but he shook his head. "The higher language still lies out of reach, And sweet your rhymes, my sons; but, ah!" he said, "They are not music, only sweeter speech." His sons took clay, and kneaded it with skill Into the images of beasts, and men, And gods. But "Music," Adam murmur'd still, "In form alone I find not." Col- our then To form they added—colour squeezed and ground From herbs and earths—and pict- ures rich they wrought Of man, his doings, and the world around. But not in these was found what Adam sought. "Things seen and known," he said, "they mimic well, But all things known and seen are, I surmise, Themselves but pictures of invis- ible, Or echoes of unheard, infinities.</p>	<p>Definite are words, forms, and col- ours, each: Music alone is infinite."</p> <p style="text-align: right;">And none</p> <p>Of Adam's offspring understood that speech, Save Jubal only. Jubal was the son Of Lamech, whose progenitor was Cain. His life's ancestral consciousness of death Stretch'd each sensation to a finer strain; Into his listening ear earth's light- est breath An infinite mystery breath'd; in every sound That mystery sent a message to his soul; Nor could he rest till definite means he found Its messengers to summon and con- trol. And what he sought by wistful ways unnumber'd, Searching, at last he found in things where long Had Music on the breast of Silence slumber'd, Waiting his summons to awake and throng The bronzen tubes he wrought with stops and vents, Or shells with silver lute-strings overlaid. When Jubal play'd upon these in- struments A visionary transport, as he play'd, Rose in each listener and reveal'd to him The beauty and the bliss of Para- dise, The songs and splendours of the Seraphim.</p> <p>Albeit these transports from a mere device</p>
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Of wind-blown pipes in order ranged  
arose,  
Or strings that, smitten, render'd  
response sharp.

And Jubal was the father of all  
those  
Whose hand is on the organ and  
the harp.

### III.

#### THE LEGEND OF LOVE.

EVE had heard all, but nothing had  
she seen :

For, ere the Archangel's sword was  
drawn, dividing

The oneness of Eternity, between  
The gates of Eden fraudulently  
gliding,

Athwart the wilderness the Snake  
slid near.

And, where beneath the weight of  
one day's ill

Fallen she lay, into the woman's  
ear

He whisper'd, "Look not! utter  
not! lie still!"

Eve heard, and at his bidding still  
she lay,

Nor look'd, nor utter'd.

In the woman's eyes

Thus linger'd a reflection of what  
they

Last look'd on ere she closed them  
— Paradise.

For all the Archangel's weapon  
shore away

From Man's perception was what  
lay before

The gaze of Adam when that  
sword's sharp ray

(Rending his cloven consciousness  
in twain)

Parted the Present from the Past.  
But o'er

The loveliness that in their looks  
had lain

When last on Eden from afar she  
gazed,

The lids of Eve were fallen ere (for  
bane

Or blessing) Adam's granted prayer  
erased

For ever from the records of his  
brain

Each memory of Paradise.

And there,

In Eve's shut eyes whate'er on earth  
is left

Of Eden — faint reflections of it,  
fair

Fallacious phantoms of a bliss be-  
reft

Of all reality — escaped the stroke  
That from remembrance all the rest

dispell'd.

So Adam in Eve's eyes, when he  
awoke,

Vague semblances of Paradise be-  
held;

And that lost gleam of Eden's light  
that still

Dreamlike and dim in his own be-  
ing dwelt

Responded to them with a mystic  
thrill,

Tho' Adam understood not what he  
felt.

And still Eve's daughters in their  
looks retain

Those mirror'd mockeries their  
mother's eyes

Bequeath'd them, tho' the Paradise  
they feign

Is now a long-forbidden Paradise.  
Reveal'd in Woman's gaze Man seems

to see  
The wisht-for Eden he hath lost.

He deems  
That Eden still in Woman's self

must be,  
And he would fain re-enter it. His

dreams  
Are kindled, by the mystic light  
that lies



In these sweet looks, to fervid wish-  
fulness;  
And, missing what he ne'er hath  
known, he sighs  
For what, itself, is but a sigh — the  
bliss  
Which there he seeks, and there is  
lost again.

No more, O nevermore, those steps  
of his,  
Whose progress is but a progressive  
pain,  
The Paradise they seek may reach  
and rove!  
Yet still the search is sweet, albeit  
in vain;  
It lasts for ever, and men call it  
LOVE.

## IV.

## THE LEGEND OF THE IDEAL.

WHEN, at the archangelic bidding  
(blest  
With one brief vision of his happy  
past  
In all the lost delights of Eden drest)  
Adam on Paradise had look'd his  
last,  
There every form of loveliness be-  
loved  
Whose beauty, dear to his adoring  
eye,  
Had breathed delight thro' all the  
haunts of yore,  
And clothed in gladness all the days  
gone by,  
The man beheld, save one.

For Eve no more  
Among the abandon'd bowers of  
Eden moved.  
Eden was Eveless.

Thus, Man's memory  
Of Woman as in Paradise she was  
The archangelic sword had not  
transfixt.

This memory made in Adam's mind,  
alas,  
A visionary image, vaguely mixt  
With that stray glimpse of Eden's  
light that fell  
Into his slumber, and became a  
dream,  
The dream of Adam's life. And  
there, too well  
Remember'd, with her beauty's phan-  
tom gleam  
Mocking him, moved the Eve of  
Paradise;  
Immeasurably fairer than the Eve  
That walk'd by Adam's side with  
sullen sighs  
And faded cheek — condemn'd, like  
him, to grieve  
And to grow old; like him, to brave  
the bleakness  
Of life's long desert; and, with him,  
to share  
The weight of many a burden, borne  
in meekness  
Or borne in bitterness, still hard to  
bear;  
An earthly woman, with a woman's  
weakness,  
A woman's faults.

That phantom, faultless fair,  
(The unforgotten Eve of Paradise,  
Beautiful as he first beheld her  
there,  
Ere any tear had dimm'd her glori-  
ous eyes)  
Long after Paradise itself had  
been  
By him forgotten, haunted Adam's  
gaze.  
And Adam made comparison be-  
tween  
The faithful partner of his faultful  
days,  
Who stray'd, and sinn'd, and suffer'd  
by his side,  
And that imagined woman. With  
a sigh,  
Her unattainable beauty, when he  
died,

Adam bequeath'd to his posterity,  
Who call'd it THE IDEAL.

And Mankind  
Still cherish it, and still it cheats  
them all.

For; with the Ideal Woman in his  
mind,

Fair as she was in Eden ere the Fall,  
Still each doth discontentedly com-  
pare

The sad associate of his earthly lot;  
And still the Earthly Woman seems  
less fair

Than her ideal image unforget.

\* \* \* \* \*

And Adam slept and dream'd and  
waked again

From day to day, from age to age.  
Apace

Time trod his self-repeating path.  
To Men

Man grew, and Adam became Ad-  
am's Race.

The Race of Adam, by his granted  
prayer

Born as it was oblivious of life's  
source,

Went onward, lighted only here  
and there

And now and then, along its eyeless  
course,

By visionary flashes brief and rare  
Of unexplain'd remembrance, that  
appear'd

Vague prescience. For the goal  
whereto Man goes

Is his recover'd starting-point —  
tho', rear'd

In a profound forgetfulness, he  
knows

No longer whence or whither winds  
the track

His steps have enter'd, and so lives  
like those

Who, dreaming, dream not that  
sleep leads at last

To waking, that to wake is to come  
back,

And that what seems the Future is  
the Past.

But round that Ghost of Human  
Loveliness

Which over Human Life's unlovely  
way

Hover'd afar, evading the caress  
It still invoked, the reminiscent ray  
Of Eden's glory (lost in Adam's  
Dream

And mingled with his soul) so  
shone and glow'd,

That on Man's spirit the reflected  
gleam

Of its divine effulgence oft bestow'd  
A supersensuous potency of sight,  
Piercing, without an effort of his  
will,

The Universal Veil that dims the  
light

Of Universal Truth. A teeming  
thrill

Of recognition thro' his senses ran  
From things that power reveal'd to  
him: and he

To Nature cried, "Behold thy mis-  
sing plan!

For is not this what thou hast tried  
to be?"

Whereto, from all her conscious  
deeps, to Man

Nature responded, "Yes!"

In toil and pain  
At other times, by other ways,

Man's wits  
Search after knowledge, but can

ne'er attain  
The flying point that on before him

flits.

For he is as a voyager in vain  
Sailing towards horizons that re-  
cede

From phantom frontier lines of sky  
and main,

With furtive motion measured by  
the speed

Of their pursuer. But wherever  
shines

<p>That sudden ray of reminiscence rare, There, and there only, the conver- gent lines Of the orb'd Universe shut fast, and there Man's knowledge rests, untravell'd, at the goal. For, be it ne'er so trivial, ne'er so mean, The one becomes the All, the part the Whole, When, thro' them both, what each conceal'd is seen.</p> <p>And age by age, man after man es- saying To fix for endless worship and de- light, In shrines of permanence for ever staying, These gleams of truth for ever taking flight,</p>	<p>Men fashion'd forth new forms of Time and Space, Idealising both. The work they wrought In Space was Beauty, and in Time 'twas Grace. These two ideals everywhere they sought; But the ideal human form and face Were still the fairest, still the love- liest. And still thro' human action, human thought, And most of all thro' human love, men's quest With fondest fervour roams to find the sphere Of that Ideal World wherein the part Includes the Whole, the one the All. For there Men are to Man transform'd, and life to Art.</p>
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## SECOND SERIES. — MAN AND BEAST.

"Thou hast put all things under his feet: all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field." — PSALM viii.

### I.

#### THE LEGEND OF THE ELE- PHANT.

<p>ONE day when Adam, as he dug the ground, Lifted his forehead to wipe off the sweat That dript upon his labour, gazing round He saw (and at that sight his fear was great) A mountain moving toward him.</p> <p style="text-align: right; padding-right: 20px;">Sore afraid, Adam fell prostrate and began to pray.</p>	<p>For every time that Adam fear'd he pray'd, And every thing he fear'd he wor- shipt. Grey And great, this formidable moun- tain made Gravely along the plain its gradual way, Till over Adam hover'd its huge shade. Then, in a language lost for ever and aye, The Mountain to the Man, reproach- ful, said — "Dost thou not know me, Adam?"</p> <p style="text-align: right; padding-right: 20px;">"Mountain, nay," The Man replied, "nor did I ever see</p>
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A mountain move, as thou dost.  
 Yesterday  
 I met a mountain, but 'twas unlike  
 thee,  
 Far larger, and it lay athwart my  
 track,  
 Nor moved altho' I bent to it my  
 knee,  
 So on I pass'd over the mountain's  
 back.  
 Was that a sin? So many sins  
 there be!  
 And art thou come to punish it,  
 alack,  
 By marching on mine own back  
 over me?"

"Adam," the Mountain answer'd  
 him, "arise!"  
 Not at my feet thy place is. Whence  
 this dread?  
 Alas, when we were still in Para-  
 dise  
 Fast friends were we." But Adam  
 hung his head,  
 And mutter'd, "Friends? I know  
 not what that is.  
 Why dost thou persecute me, and  
 pursue?  
 Is Paradise a wilderness like this?  
 I know it not, and thee I never  
 knew."  
 "Well didst thou know me once,  
 when we were there,"  
 The Mountain answer'd, "nor canst  
 thou deny  
 'Twas thou who gavest me the  
 name I bear."  
 But Adam, crouching, cried, "It  
 was not I!  
 I never gave thee anything at all.  
 What wouldst thou? worship? sac-  
 rifice? roots? grain?  
 Take, and begone! Mountain, my  
 store is small."

And sullenly the savage turn'd again  
 To the hard labour of his daily lot.  
 By this the pitying Elephant per-  
 ceived

That Adam in the desert had for-  
 got  
 His happier birthplace. The good  
 beast was grieved;  
 And "Those," he said, "whom  
 thou rememb'rest not  
 Remember thee. We could not live  
 bereaved  
 Of thy loved presence, and from  
 end to end  
 Of Eden sought thee. When thou  
 didst not come  
 We mourn'd thee, missing our great  
 human friend,  
 And wondering what withheld him  
 from his home.  
 I think the fervour of our fond dis-  
 tress  
 Melted the battlements of Paradise.  
 They fell, and forth into the wil-  
 derness  
 We came to find thee. For who  
 else is wise  
 As thou art? and we hold thee great  
 above  
 Our greatest. Why hast thou for-  
 saken us  
 For this drear desert? Was not  
 Eden best?  
 Unsweet the region thou hast cho-  
 sen thus!  
 Yet less forlorn than loss of human  
 love  
 Hath left the bowers by love in  
 Eden blest.  
 So where thou dwellest shall our  
 dwelling be,  
 Since joy from Eden went when  
 thou wert gone,  
 And where thou goest we will go  
 with thee.  
 To tell thee this the others sent me  
 on."

Adam look'd up alarm'd, and trem-  
 bling cried,  
 "What others? Then I am indeed  
 undone!  
 More Elephants like thee?" The  
 beast replied,

“Alas, hast thou forgotten every-  
 one  
 Of thine old followers, the blithe  
 beasts that were  
 Thy folk in Paradise? which for  
 thy sake  
 We have abandon'd, and are come  
 to share  
 Thy labour, and near thine our lodg-  
 ing make.  
 For Man completes us all, whate'er  
 we be,  
 And to his service faithfully we  
 pledge  
 Our several forces. Leaves unto  
 the tree  
 They garment, feathers to the wing  
 they fledge,  
 Wings to the bird they bear, and  
 hands to thee,  
 Belong not more than we for Man  
 were made.  
 So if thou sufferest we will suffer  
 too,  
 And if thou toilest we thy toil will  
 aid,  
 And we will be thy loving servants  
 true,  
 And thou shalt be our master.”

Adam said

Nothing. A mist that, melting,  
 turn'd to dew  
 Was in his eyes. He could not  
 speak a word.  
 That wretched savage grovelling in  
 the dust,  
 Whose rebel will had disobey'd the  
 Lord,  
 Whose coward heart had lost both  
 love and trust,  
 Whose dull despair had from his  
 blinded eye  
 Effaced the Past, and to the Present  
 left  
 Nothing but degradation utterly  
 Of nobler reminiscences bereft,  
 What could he answer?

Nothing did he say;  
 But sank down silent on the desert  
 earth,  
 And, sinking, flung the rough-hewn  
 flint away,  
 Wherewith he had been digging its  
 hard dearth.  
 Then closer to the gentle beast he  
 crept,  
 And hid his face between his hands,  
 and wept.

## II.

## THE LEGEND OF THE ASS.

THE Elephant then lifted up on  
 high  
 His waving trunk, and trumpeted a  
 clear  
 Sonorous summons. With respon-  
 sive cry  
 To that glad signal, all the beasts  
 drew near,  
 And stood round Adam who was  
 weeping still.  
 Not one faint word of welcome did  
 he say;  
 But all to comfort him employ'd  
 their skill,  
 And each beast gave him some good  
 gift. For they,  
 When forth from Paradise they  
 went to find  
 Its unforgotten lord, had brought  
 away  
 As many of the treasures left be-  
 hind  
 By Man as each could carry.

So that day  
 (Thanks to the beasts, who had  
 preserved them) he  
 Some precious fragments of him-  
 self at length  
 Recover'd, and became in some  
 degree  
 Human again. Proud consciousness  
 of strength

The Lion gave him. Honesty of heart [dull

The Dog. A vigilance that's never

The Lynx bestow'd. The Beaver brought him art,

The Eagle aspiration. Tenderness

The Dove contributed, the Elephant Benign sagacity, the Fox address.

He gain'd a sturdy courage from the Bull:

And, all combining to supply Man's want,

Each beast and bird in tribute bountiful,

Gave Adam something he had lack'd before.

He took whate'er they gave him, and began,

As gift by gift he gather'd up the store,

Slowly to feel himself once more a man.

One beast there was who let the others pass,

Each with his tributary offering, Before him, patiently. It was the Ass.

And when his turn came some good gift to bring,

He seem'd to look for something in the grass,

But did not offer Adam anything.

Caressingly, like an importunate child,

Adam approach'd the Ass, whose shaggy head

He fondled. "Gentle are thy looks and mild,

Hast thou not brought me any gift?" he said.

The Ass replied, "My gift is all unfit

To offer thee." Adam was vext, and frown'd.

The Ass resumed, "I am ashamed of it,

Although in Paradise this gift I found.

No other beast to take it had a mind, And if I had not pick'd it from the ground

I think it would have there been left behind."

The Man heard this not wholly without shame;

But still he answer'd from a greedy heart,

"No matter! give it to me, all the same."

Then said the Ass, "If of a mind thou art

To share with me mine all, I do but claim

To keep a portion of it. Choose thy part,"

And in two parts he portion'd it. But those

Two parts appear'd unequal. With the zest

Of selfishness, Man, naturally, chose

The biggest, thinking it must be the best.

But Adam, as his wont it was, chose wrong,

For what the Ass (with a prophetic sense

Perchance of his own need of it ere long)

Had saved from Eden was BENEVOLENCE.

When thus partition'd between Man and Beast,

Benevolence its primal beauty lost;

And Adam's portion proved to be the least

Benignant, tho' he fancied it the most.

This fraction of Benevolence began,

When mingled with Man's character, alas,

To be Stupidity; and, scorn'd by Man,

'Tis Patience that has rested with the Ass.

## III.

## THE LEGEND OF THE DEAD LAMBS.

DEATH, tho' already in the world,  
 as yet  
 Had only tried his timorous tooth  
 to whet  
 On grass and leaves. But he began  
 to grow  
 Greedier, greater, and resolved to  
 know  
 The taste of stronger food than  
 such light fare.  
 To feed on human flesh he did not  
 dare,  
 Till many a meaner meal had slowly  
 given  
 The young destroyer strength to  
 vanquish even  
 His restless rival in destruction,  
 Man.  
 Meanwhile, on lesser victims he  
 began  
 To test his power: and in a cold  
 Spring night  
 Two weanling Lambs first perish'd  
 from his bite.  
 The bleatings of their dam at break  
 of day  
 Drew to the spot where her dead  
 Lambkins lay  
 The other beasts. They, understand-  
 ing not,  
 In wistful silence round that fatal  
 spot  
 Stood eyeing the dead Lambs with  
 looks forlorn.

Adam, who was upon the march  
 that morn,  
 Missing his bodyguard, turn'd back  
 to see  
 What they were doing; and there  
 also he  
 Saw the two frozen Lambkins lying  
 dead,  
 But understood not. At the last he  
 said,

“Since the Lambs cannot move,  
 methinks 'twere best  
 That I should carry them.”

So on his breast  
 He laid their little bodies, and  
 again  
 Set forward, follow'd o'er the frosty  
 plain  
 By his bewilder'd flocks. And in  
 dismay  
 They held their peace. That was a  
 silent day.  
 At night he laid the dead Lambs on  
 the grass.  
 That night still colder than the  
 other was,  
 And when the morning broke there  
 were two more  
 Dead Lambs to carry. Adam took  
 the four,  
 And in his arms he bore them, no  
 great way,  
 Till eventide. That was a sorrow-  
 ful day.

But, ere the next, two other Lamb-  
 kins died,  
 Frost-bitten in the dark. Then  
 Adam tried  
 To carry them, all six. But the  
 poor Sheep  
 Said, “Nay, we thank thee, Adam.  
 Let them sleep!  
 Thou canst not carry them. 'Tis  
 all in vain.  
 We fear our Lambkins will not  
 wake again.  
 And, if they wake, they could not  
 walk — for see,  
 Their little legs are stiffen'd. Let  
 them be!”  
 So Adam left the Lambs. And all  
 the Herd  
 Follow'd him sorrowing, and not a  
 word  
 Was spoken. Never until then had  
 they  
 Their own forsaken. That was the  
 worst day.

Eve said to Adam, as they went  
 along,  
 "Adam, last night the cold was  
 bitter strong.  
 Warm fleeces to keep out the freez-  
 ing wind  
 Have those six Lambkins thou hast  
 left behind;  
 But they will never need them any  
 more.  
 Go, fetch them here! and I will  
 make, before  
 This day be done, stout garments  
 for us both,  
 Lest we, too, wake no more." Said  
 Adam, loth  
 To do her bidding, "Why dost thou  
 suppose  
 Our Lambs will nevermore have  
 need of those  
 Warm fleeces? They are sleeping."  
 But Eve said,  
 "They are not sleeping, Adam.  
 They are dead."  
 "Dead? What is that?" "I know  
 not. But I know  
 That they no more can feel the  
 north wind blow,  
 Nor the sun burn. They cannot  
 hear the bleat  
 Of their own mothers, cannot suf-  
 fer heat  
 Or cold, or thirst or hunger, wear-  
 ness  
 Or want, again." "How dost thou  
 know all this?"  
 Ask'd Adam. And Eve whisper'd  
 in his ear,  
 "The Serpent told me." "Is the  
 Serpent here?  
 If here he be, why hath he," Adam  
 cried,  
 "No good gift brought me?"  
 Adam's wife replied,  
 "The best of gifts, if rightly un-  
 derstood,  
 He brings thee, and that gift is  
 counsel good.  
 The Serpent is a prudent beast;  
 and right!

For we were miserably cold last  
 night,  
 And may to-night be colder; and  
 hard by  
 Those dead Lambs in their woolly  
 fleeces lie,  
 Yet need them not as we do. They  
 are dead.  
 Go, fetch them hither!"

Adam shook his head,  
 But went.  
 Next morning, to the beasts' sur-  
 prise, [eyes  
 Adam and Eve appear'd before their  
 In woollen fleeces warmly gar-  
 mented.  
 And all the beasts to one another  
 said,  
 "How wonderful is Man, who can  
 make wool  
 As good as Sheep's wool, and more  
 beautiful!"  
 Only the Fox, who sniff and grinn'd,  
 had guess'd  
 Man's unacknowledged theft: and  
 to the rest  
 He sneer'd, "How wonderful is  
 Woman's whim!  
 See, Adam's wife hath made a sheep  
 of him!"

## IV.

THE LEGEND OF EVE'S  
JEWELS.

FROM that day forth Eve eyed with  
 tenderness  
 The Serpent, to whose craft she  
 owed her dress.  
 But "More," he whisper'd in her  
 ear one day,  
 "Thou still mayst owe me, if it  
 please thee. Say,  
 Wouldst thou be fair?"

The woman smiled, "Behold me!  
 Am I not fair already?" "Who  
 hath told thee



That thou art fair?" the Serpent  
ask'd. Again  
Eve smiled, and answer'd, "Adam."  
"Ah, but when?"  
He ask'd. And, this time sighing  
as she smiled,  
She said, "Before the birth of our  
first child."  
"I thought so," said the Serpent.  
"Long ago!"  
Eve's eyes grew tearful. She re-  
plied, "I know  
It was but yesterday I chanced to  
trace  
Reflected in a mountain pool the face  
That he had praised; and I was  
satisfied  
That certainly, unless the water lied,  
Adam was right." "*Was right,*"  
the Serpent said,  
"So was last summer sweet."  
"Doth beauty fade?"  
Eve murmur'd. "Ay, with youth,"  
said he. "And thou  
Canst make me young again?"  
"Not that. But how,  
When young no more, to make thee  
fair again  
I know a way." "What way?"  
said Eve. "Explain!"  
"It is," he answer'd, "by adorning  
thee."  
"And what wouldst thou adorn me  
with?" said she.  
"Myself!" he whisper'd.

Then the Serpent roll'd  
His ruby-colour'd rings and coils  
of gold  
Around the form of Eve: her neck  
enlaced,  
And was a necklace; girt her pliant  
waist,  
And was a girdle; with elastic bound  
Above her knee his wistful clasp  
enwound,  
And was a garter; with repeated  
twist  
Of twinkling chain entwined her  
tender wrist,

And was a bracelet. Last of all,  
her brow  
He crown'd, and cried, "Man's  
Queen, I hail thee now!"

Eve blusht. The sense of some  
new sexual power  
Unknown to all her being till that  
hour,  
Within it kindled a superb surprise.  
Back, with half-open'd lips and  
half-shut eyes,  
She lean'd to its rich load her jew-  
ell'd head.

And at her ear again the Serpent  
said,  
"By the bright blaze of thine  
adornment, see  
What in the years to come thy sex  
shall be!  
Mere female animal, much weaker  
than  
The male its master, not the Queen  
of Man,  
Scarce even his mate, that sex was  
born; but more  
Than it was born shall it become.  
Such store  
Doth in it lurk of secret subtilty,  
Such seed of complex life, as by-  
and-by  
Shall grow into full Woman; and,  
when grown,  
The Woman shall avenge, tho' she  
disown,  
The Female, her forgotten ances-  
tress.  
Mother of both, my glittering caress  
Now wakes beneath thy bosom's  
kindled snow  
Whole worlds of Womanhood in  
embryo!  
A penal law controls Man's fallen  
state.  
Its name is Progress: and, to stim-  
ulate [Decay,  
That progress to its destin'd goal,  
Woman, with growing power, shall  
all the way

Its course accompany — from hap-  
 piness [distress;  
 And ignorance to knowledge and  
 From careless impulse to contrived  
 device;  
 From spontaneity to artifice;  
 From simple to sophisticated life;  
 From faith to doubt, and from re-  
 pose to strife.  
 Whilst, still as Progress doth its  
 prey pursue,  
 The weaker shall the stronger-born  
 subdue,  
 Man subjugating first those mon-  
 sters grim  
 Whose strength is more than his;  
 then, Woman him;  
 Tho' he born weaker than most  
 beasts, and she  
 Born weaker even that man's own  
 weakness, be.  
 So shall the Feminine Force that  
 set him on  
 Still keep him going till his course  
 be done. [way,  
 Far hath he yet to travel his long  
 But thou hast started him. And  
 on the day  
 He lost that Paradise he ne'er had  
 won,  
 Here was his progress, thanks to  
 thee, begun.  
 That was Man's first step forward.  
 I perceive  
 He (thanks again to thee) is on the  
 eve [him  
 Of yet another. Good advice to  
 Thou gavest, whence he got his  
 winter trim,  
 So warm and stout. But at that  
 fleecy coat  
 The beasts, his unprogressive  
 friends, I note,  
 Begin to look suspiciously askance.  
 And thence do I predict his next  
 advance.  
 'Twixt Man and Beast the inevita-  
 ble strife  
 Must needs enforce 'twixt Man and  
 Man a life

More artificial. And therefrom  
 shall rise  
 The Future Woman; form'd to civ-  
 ilize,  
 Corrupt, and ruin, raise, and over-  
 throw [owe  
 Cycles of social types that all shall  
 To her creative and destructive  
 sway  
 Their beauty's blossom, and their  
 strength's decay.  
 Behold, then, in thyself the primal  
 source  
 Of Human Progress, and its latest  
 force!  
 For, since from thee shall thy fair  
 daughters, Eve,  
 A subtler sex than all thy sons  
 receive,  
 Their beauty shall complete what  
 thine began,  
 Thou crown'd Queen Mother of the  
 Queens of Man!"

## V.

## THE LEGEND OF FABLE.

WITH many a plume and tuft of  
 brilliant dye,  
 And blushing berries twined in belt  
 and tress,  
 Eve on her clothing had begun to try  
 What ornament could add to useful-  
 ness  
 From day to day. But, as the days  
 went by,  
 The more she prized her borrow'd  
 charms, the less  
 She loved their owners who, approv-  
 ing not  
 Those pilfer'd splendours, with re-  
 sentful eye [got,  
 Beheld them all. For out the secret  
 How from the bodies of the dead  
 were torn [in:  
 The garments Eve and Adam gloried  
 And to the beasts, who were as they  
 were born,  
 It seem'd a scandal and a sort of sin  
 That their own wool and fur should  
 thus be worn

By limbs not theirs. "Let each defend his skin!"  
They said to one another.

In those days  
There was a little animal Eve yet  
Loved passing well; for it had pleasant ways,  
Was smooth, and soft, and sleek,  
and seem'd to set  
A grateful store on her capricious praise.  
Curl'd in her lap 'twould nestle without fear,  
And let her stroke its back and bosom white, [dear  
Until to Eve this beast became so  
That in its confidence she took delight.  
But, when the Herd discover'd that her dress  
Was stolen from their plunder'd kith and kin,  
Eve's little favourite fear'd each fresh caress  
Her hand bestow'd on it, and felt within  
Its frighten'd heart a sharp mistrustfulness, [skin?"  
For "If she took a fancy to my  
The creature mused. And ever from that date  
Its thoughts and looks were all alert to find  
Some means whereby it might escape the fate  
Whose horrid prospect hover'd vague behind  
Eve's fondling fingers. Once, when peering round,  
Inquisitively careful to explore  
All nooks and corners till such means were found, [floor.  
It spied a heap of fish-bones on the  
Then, from Eve's lap down-sliding to the ground,  
It roll'd itself among them o'er and o'er  
Till it became a Porcupine. And  
"How

To guard my skin," it chuckled,  
"nevermore  
Need I henceforth take any pains, for now  
My skin it is that will henceforth guard me!"  
So in this unapproachable condition  
Secure it lived: for its security  
Was even the same as Man's was —  
Arm'd Suspicion.  
Suspicion everywhere! No peace could be  
On earth henceforth. To war suspicion led.  
Long ages is it since that war began,  
And seas of blood have been on both sides shed, [Man  
Yet still it lasts. In servitude to  
Some captiv'd beasts survive. The Dog is one.  
But, just because the Dog to Man is true,  
From his approach his former comrades run,  
Deeming him traitor to their cause.  
Some few  
(The fiercest and the savagest alone)  
An intermittent and unequal strife  
Around their dens in desert lands pursue,  
And they and Man are enemies for life.  
Nor they and Man alone: for, confidence  
Once gone, the beasts upon each other prey'd  
Like beasts, without the plausible pretence  
Of good intentions by Man's nature made  
For his bad doings in the grim campaign  
'Twixt him and them. This so revolted her,  
That Justice from the world-wide battle-plain  
Fled blushing. Pity's flight was tardier:

But, after lingering long in vain  
 appeal  
 From heart to heart, she follow'd  
 Justice too, [reveal  
 Where only bloodstains left behind  
 The path: whereby she fled from  
 mortal view.

And they, the gentle Beasts of Para-  
 dise

That were Man's once familiar in-  
 timates,

Far from the menace of his mur-  
 derous eyes

Whither, O whither are they gone?  
 The gates [there

Of Paradise are shut for ever, and  
 No refuge for Man's victims, nor  
 for him,

Remains on earth. But, from the  
 bowers that were

With Eden lost, the pitying Sera-  
 phim

Sow'd in the waste one seed. A  
 forest fair

Sprung from it—giant trees of  
 lusty limb,

Long vaults of bloom and verdure  
 never bare,

Where forms, half-bird half-blos-  
 som, flash and swim

From bough to bough, and, hush'd  
 in windless air,

Soft shadows flutter from the whis-  
 perous wings

Of half-awaken'd dreams; while all  
 things there

Seem slowly turning into other  
 things,

As, down the bowery hollows to  
 the brim

Of immemorial seas, melodious  
 springs

From undiscoverable sources bear  
 Primeval secrets.

Deep into the dim  
 But deathless shelter of that blest  
 repair

Those gentle beasts departed, and  
 became

Forthwith imperishably fabulous.  
 For History, that doth so loud pro-  
 claim  
 And with such curiosity discuss  
 Man's perishable life and course  
 unstable,  
 Of them and theirs knows nothing,  
 and the name  
 Of their unfading Forest Home is  
 Fable.

[us,  
 Far off, and ever farther off from  
 That Forest and the dwellers in it  
 seem,  
 As far and farther on we travel  
 fast,  
 And more and more like a remem-  
 ber'd dream  
 Becomes the glimmering wonder of  
 the Past.

But, o'er a wingèd and four-footed  
 folk

Whose unsophisticated nature yields  
 Spontaneous service to her even  
 yoke,

There Justice reigns revered; there  
 Pity shields

An else defenceless flock; and there  
 do they

Their joint tribunal hold, where  
 every cause

That in this human world hath gone  
 astray,

And honest trial miss'd, by lovelier  
 laws

Than ours is welcomed to impar-  
 tial test,

All cases pleaded, be they what  
 they may,

All rights establish'd, and all  
 wrongs redress'd.

How far away it seems, how far  
 away!

Yet one step only from the trodden  
 track

That to its daily pilgrims, every  
 one,

Appears to be the very zodiac  
 The universe itself is travelling on.

Let any man but turn aside, and lo!  
 Around whatever path he chance to  
 pace  
 With steps unconscious of the way  
 they go  
 Far-reaching Fable's million-  
 branch'd embrace  
 Doth its unfathomable influence  
 throw.

To him who tells these tales such  
 chance befell  
 Once on a time: and in that Forest  
 old  
 ('Tho' how he enter'd it he cannot  
 tell)  
 With one whose face he may no  
 more behold  
 Or there or here, he was beguiled  
 to dwell  
 Full many a month. But few of  
 his own kind,  
 Among the folk who there safe  
 dwelling have, [find.  
 To greet him or to guide him did he  
 Of these, the wisest was a Phryg-  
 ian slave,  
 The holiest Assisi's tender Saint.  
 Phædrus upon the borders of the  
 land  
 Sat listening; and to him came  
 echoes faint  
 From voices far within. His care-  
 ful hand  
 On tablets smooth deliberately  
 wrote  
 In unimpulsive verse, correctly  
 plann'd,  
 All that thus reach'd him from a  
 source remote.  
 But there, without restraint, from  
 place to place  
 And led by none, tho' follow'd by a  
 band  
 Of Loves and Graces whose light  
 steps kept pace  
 With his inimitably varied lay,  
 Free-footed went the witty Fabulist  
 Of social France. And there our  
 English Gay,

Methodically playful, neither miss'd  
 Nor much advanced his unadventur-  
 ous way.

Howbeit along that dim and vast  
 domain  
 From the discourse of any one of  
 these  
 Scant guidance did its last explorer  
 gain.  
 There were so many more instruct-  
 ors! Trees,  
 Rocks, rivers, rainbows, clouds,  
 dew, wind, and rain,  
 No less than birds and beasts, that  
 live at ease  
 An unmolested life by hill and  
 plain  
 Throughout its vocal realms (where  
 all that is  
 Is all alive) have tongues, and talk  
 as well  
 As men or books; nor do they take  
 amiss  
 The questions ask'd them, nor re-  
 fuse to tell  
 Their secrets to the souls that,  
 lingering there,  
 Have learn'd their language.

What this listener heard,  
 There lingering long, he may not  
 here declare.  
 But many a tale to him by beast  
 and bird  
 In Fable Land imparted (if time  
 spare  
 The life of any purpose long  
 deferr'd, [won,  
 Or to postponed occasion, when 'tis  
 Recall an errant will's disbanded  
 powers)  
 Fain would he tell beneath the  
 lingering sun  
 Of months unborn, that hide mid-  
 summer hours  
 Whose golden gossamers have not  
 yet spun  
 Their shining clues to still-unblos-  
 som'd bowers.

## L'ENVOI.

## AD ÆSOPUM.

1.

SAY, Æsop, wast thou born a slave,  
Who dost so freely speak?  
Thy thoughts so upright and so  
brave!

Thy back so bent and weak?  
So ugly and so coarse thy face?  
And, in thy fancies all, such grace!

2.

Did thy rude comrades play thee  
pranks,

Thy master beat thee sore,  
Yet live to own with grateful  
thanks

Thy wit had saved his store?  
How fail'd such wit thyself to save  
From an unjust and cruel grave?

3.

Hadst thou, indeed, a stammering  
tongue,

Splay foot and limping walk,  
Whose children are so fair and  
strong?

Didst thou with Solon talk?  
And didst thou sup with Croesus too  
At Sardinian feasts? Is all that true?

4.

Vain questions! Not to us nor thee,  
Dear Sage, it matters now  
If true or false the stories be  
Of what thou *wast*: for thou  
Art what we *are*: and all thou art  
We will receive, and all impart.

5.

Of thee, who knewst the world so  
well,

Not much the world hath known:  
Thy voice to us doth only tell  
Our secrets, not thine own:  
But thou before us everywhere  
Hast been, and still we find thee  
there.

6.

Great Sire of Fable! Age to age  
Extends, from north to south  
From east to west, thine heritage,  
That grows from mouth to  
mouth.

And, with its growth still growing  
thus,  
Thou art thyself grown fabulous.

## POEMS.

## TRANSFORMATIONS.

(A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.)

1.

“ HERE at last alone,  
You and I together!  
All the night our own,  
And the warm June weather!  
Not a soul in sight!

What we will, we may.  
Nothing is by night  
As it was by day.  
Look around you! See,  
All things change themselves.  
Blossom, bower, and tree  
Turn to Fays and Elves;  
Trivial things and common  
Into rare things rising.  
Why should man and woman

Be less enterprising?  
 Fashion's formal creatures  
 We till now have been,  
 With prim-pattern'd features  
 And a borrow'd mien.  
 Now the mask is broken,  
 Now the fetters fall,  
 Wishes long unspoken  
 Now are all in all!  
 Wondrous transformation  
 Now, for you and me,  
 Waits our invocation.  
 Say, what shall we be?"

2.

"What you will," said She.

3.

"Look, then, and listen! For you  
 must be waiting,  
 Behind a high grating,  
 The sound of my signal. Along the  
 wild land  
 I have gallop'd full speed on my  
 coal-black steed  
 To free my love from my foeman's  
 hand,  
 And lo! in the moonlight alert I  
 stand  
 Close under the castle wall.  
 Look out, I am here!  
 Leap down, nor fear!  
 For into my rescuing arms you fall,  
 Safe and free. They are round you,  
 see!  
 One saddle must serve us, so cling  
 to me well,  
 And away, and away, thro' the night  
 we flee!  
 But hark! 'Tis the clang of the  
 'larum bell.  
 Our pursuers awake. For dear  
 life's sake  
 Cling to me closer, and closer still!  
 And speed, speed, my coal-black  
 steed!  
 They are hurrying after us over the  
 hill.

But clear'd is the river, and cross'd  
 is the heath,  
 Deep into the sheltering woods we  
 dart,  
 And O what a ride! for I feel your  
 breath,  
 And how hot it burns! and I hear  
 your heart,  
 And how loud it beats! As I laugh  
 'We part  
 No more, come life come death!"

4.

"No, no,"  
 She sigh'd, "not so!  
 Too fiercely fleets your coal-black  
 steed,  
 And pleasure faints in passion's  
 speed,  
 And the bliss that lingers the best  
 must be,"  
 Sigh'd She.

5.

"Listen, then, and look, once more!  
 We are sailing round a southern  
 island.  
 Fragrant breathes the dusky shore,  
 Folded under many a moonlit high-  
 land.  
 Fragrant breathes the dusky shore,  
 And where dips the languid oar  
 Wavelets dimple flash and darkle,  
 Odours wander, fireflies sparkle:  
 Thro' them all our bark is gliding,  
 Gliding softly, gliding slowly:  
 Not a cloud their sweetness hiding,  
 All the heavens are hush and holy:  
 Midnight's panting pulse uncertain  
 Faintly fans the heaving curtain  
 O'er the silken-pillow'd seat  
 Where you lie with slipper'd feet,  
 Tresses loosed, and zone unbound;  
 While, my ribbon'd lute unslinging,  
 I, your troubadour, beside you,  
 O'er its chords, that trembling  
 sound,  
 Pour the song my soul is singing:  
 List, and let its music guide you,  
 Till the goal of dreams be found!"

6.

“ Ah, stay so ! ”  
 She murmur'd low,  
 “ Song and stream for ever flow !  
 And, if this be dreaming, never  
 Let me wake, but dream for ever,  
 Dreaming thus, if dream it be ! ”  
 Then He :

7.

“ As night's magic blends together  
 Moonbeams, starbeams, odours,  
     dews,  
 In a hush of happy weather,  
 Earth and heaven to interfuse ;  
 So my song draws softly down  
 All your soul into mine own,  
 Bounteous gift on gift bestowing :  
 First, that heaven, your face ; and  
     then  
 Heaven's divinest stars, those eyes  
 Under dewy lashes glowing ;  
 Last, those lips, whose smile ca-  
     resses  
 All their breath beatifies ;  
 And the fragrance o'er me flowing  
 From those downward-shaken  
     tresses,  
 Whose delicious wildernesses  
 Hide such haunts of happy sighs ! ”

8.

“ Rise, ah rise ! ”  
 Faint She whisper'd. “ Hold me  
     fast !  
 For away the fixt earth flies,  
 And I know not where we are.  
 What is coming ? What is past ?  
 Bursting, flashing, fleeting, see,  
 Swiftly star succeeds to star  
 Till . . . in what new world are  
     we ? ”  
 “ Love's, ” said He.

9.

“ Song and lute the spell obeying,  
 Cease in silence sweeter, stronger,  
 Than song-singing or lute-playing :

And, entranced, I know no longer  
 Whither are my senses straying :  
 But I feel my spirit blending  
 With the bliss of thine, and end-  
     ing  
 Tremulously lost in thee ! ”

10.

“ Hush ! ” sigh'd She,  
 “ Lest this dream, if dream alone  
 And no more than dream it be,  
 By a breath should be undone.  
 For ah, ” She sigh'd,  
 “ I and thou, what are we now ? ”  
 And He replied,  
 “ Thou art I, and I am thou,  
 And we are one ! ”

## NORTH AND SOUTH.

1.

FAR in the southern night she  
 sleeps ;  
 And there the heavens are hush'd,  
 and there,  
 Low murmuring from the moonlit  
 deeps,  
 Faint music lulls the dreamful air.  
 No tears on her soft lashes hang,  
 On her calm lips no kisses glow.  
 The throb, the passion, and the pang  
 Are over now.

2.

But I ? From this full-peopled north,  
 Whose midnight roar around me  
 stirs,  
 How wildly still my heart goes  
 forth  
 To haunt that silent home of  
 hers !  
 There night by night, with no re-  
 lease,  
 These sleepless eyes the vision  
 see,  
 And all its visionary peace  
 But maddens me.



## ATHENS.

(1865.)

THE burnt-out heart of Hellas here  
behold!

Quench'd fire-pit of the quick ex-  
plosive Past,  
Thought's highest crater—all its  
fervours cold,  
Ashes and dust at last!

And what Hellenic light is living  
now

To gild, not Greece, but other  
lands, is given:  
Not where the splendour sank, the  
after-glow  
Of sunset stays in heaven.

But loud o'er Grecian ruins still the  
lark

Doth, as of old, Hyperion's glory  
hail,  
And from Hymettus, in the moon-  
light, bark  
The exuberant nightingale!

## CINTRA.

(1868.)

1.

IN the brake are creaking  
The tufted cancs,  
And the wind is streaking  
With fugitive stains  
A welkin haunted by hovering rains.

2.

Low lemon-boughs under  
My garden wall,  
In the Quinta yonder,  
By fits let fall  
Here an emerald leaf, there a pale  
gold ball,

3.

On the black earth, studded  
With droplets bright

From the fruit trees, budded,  
Some pink, some white,  
And now overflowed with watery  
light.

4.

For the sun, thro' a chasm  
Of the colourless air,  
With a jubilant spasm  
From his broken lair  
Upleaps and stands, for a moment,  
bare!

5.

But a breath bewilders  
The wavering weather;  
And those sky-builders  
That put together  
The vaporous walls of the cloud-  
bound ether

6.

From the mountains hasten  
In pale displeasure  
To mortice and fasten  
The bright embrasure,  
Shutting behind it day's innermost  
azure.

7.

On the bleak blue rim  
Of the lonesome lea,  
Shapeless and dim  
As far things at sea-  
Mafra yon nebulous clump must be!

8.

Across the red furrows  
To where in the sides  
Of the hills he burrows  
(As a reptile hides)  
The many-legg'd, long-back'd, aque-  
duct strides.

9.

Just over the pines,  
As from tapers snuff'd,

A thin smoke twines  
Till its course is luff'd  
the edge of the cliff, by the  
breeze rebuff'd;

10.

Whence, downward turning  
A dubious haze,  
(From the charcoal-burning)  
It strays, delays,  
And departs by a dozen different  
ways.

11.

The chestnuts shiver,  
The olive trees  
Recoil and quiver,  
Stung by the breeze,  
Like sleepers awaked by a swarm  
of bees.

12.

Down the glimmering lanes  
The grey oxen go;  
And the grumbling wains  
They drag onward slow  
Wail, as they wind in a woeful row,

13.

With fruits and casks  
To the seaside land,  
Where Colares ba ks  
In a glory bland,  
And from gardens o'erhanging the  
scented sand

14.

Great aloes glisten  
And roses dangle.  
But listen! listen!  
The mule-bells jangle,  
Rounding the rock-hewn path's  
sharp angle.

15.

As their chime dies out  
The dim woods among,

With the ghostly shout  
And the distant song  
Of the muleteers that have pass'd  
along,

16.

From behind the hill  
Whence comes that roar,  
Up the road so still  
But a minute before?  
'Tis a message arrived from the  
grieved seashore.

17.

And, tho' close it seems,  
Yet from far away  
It is come, as in dreams  
The announcements they  
To the souls that can understand  
convey.

18.

For whenever you hear,  
As you hear it now,  
That sound so clear,  
You may surely know  
Foul weather's at hand, tho' no  
wind should blow.

19.

But the cork wood is sighing,  
It cannot find rest;  
And the raven, flying  
Around his black nest,  
Hath signall'd the storm to the  
Sierra's crest.

20.

Plaintive and sullen,  
Penalva moans;  
The torrents are swollen;  
The granite bones  
Of Cruzalta crackle with split pine  
cones;

21.

Roused and uproarious  
The huge oaks yell

Till the ghost of Honorlus  
Is scared from his cell,  
Where not even a ghost could in  
quietude dwell;

22.

For the woods all around  
Its cork-clad walls  
Are storm'd by the sound  
Of the waterfalls  
That have shatter'd their mountain  
pedestals.

23.

On the topmost shelf  
Of the Pena, fast  
As the rock itself,  
In a cluster vast  
Stood castle and keep but a mo-  
ment past;

24.

Now, in what to the sight  
Is but empty air,  
They are vanisht quite,  
And the sharp peak, bare  
As a shaven chin, is upslanted there.

25.

Can a film of cloud,  
Like the fiat of Fate,  
In its sightless shroud  
Thus obliterate  
The ponderous mass of a pile so  
great?

26.

'Twas a fact, yet a breath  
Has that fact dispell'd.  
So truth, underneath  
A cloud compell'd  
To hide her head, is no more be-  
held.

27.

The achievement of years,  
By a minute effaced,

Departs, disappears,  
And is all replaced  
By a cold blank colourless empty  
waste.

28.

All forms, alas,  
That remain or flee  
As the winds that pass  
May their choice decree,  
Stand faster far than have stood  
by me

29.

The man I served,  
And the woman I loved.  
But what if they swerved  
As their faith was proved,  
When a mountain can be by a mist  
removed?

## SORRENTO REVISITED.

(1885.)

ON the lizarded wall and the gold-  
orb'd tree  
Spring's splendour again is shin-  
ing;  
But the glow of its gladness awakes  
in me  
Only a vast repining.

To Sorrento, asleep on the soft blue  
breast  
Of the sea that she loves, and  
dreaming,  
Lone Capri uplifts an ethereal crest  
In the luminous azure gleaming.

And the Sirens are singing again  
from the shore.

'Tis the song that they sang to  
Ulysses;  
But the sound of a song that is  
sung no more  
My soul in their music misses.

## FRAGRANCE.

(A SPRING BALLAD.)

## DEDICATION

TO —

HERE Spring with her gifts is come.  
 She hath given white buds to the hedge,  
 To the wandering swallow a home,  
 And a rose to your window ledge.  
 In return for the gifts she gave  
 A gift for herself she sought,  
 And I, of the best I have,  
 Gave to her a single thought.  
 That thought was a thought of you,  
 Spring laid it the leaves among,  
 There fed it on light and dew,  
 And return'd it to me in a song.  
 So the twice-given gift, as to me  
 Spring brought it, to you I bring:  
 For this song is the child of three,  
 Us two, and our playmate, Spring.

## BALLAD.

1.

THE soul of all the souls that have  
 become  
 Sweet odours, I am Fragrance from  
 afar.  
 Deep hid in Beauty's bosom was  
 my home,  
 And known to me her inmost mys-  
 teries are.

2.

I know the secret of the Rose. She  
 blushes,  
 I know the reason why.  
 A hopeless passion in her heart she  
 hushes  
 For the bright Beetle-Fly.  
 He was a bold and brilliant cavalier:  
 He woo'd her in the love-time of  
 the year  
 A livelong summer day:  
 He woo'd her, and he won her: then  
 betray'd her,  
 And, breaking all the vows that he  
 had made her,

Upon a sky-built sunbeam sail'd  
 away.

3.

Then the Rose wisht for wings to  
 follow him,  
 But all her wishings were of no  
 avail.  
 What she could do, she did. In  
 pilgrim trim  
 From bower to bower she wander'd  
 down the dale,  
 And climb'd and climb'd, and  
 peep'd into the dim  
 Nest of the Nightingale.

4.

The Nightingale beheld her, and  
 averr'd  
 That she was fairest of the fair.  
 He said,  
 "Fair crimson-wingèd creature, be  
 a bird!  
 And I with thee, and none but thee,  
 will wed."  
 His amorous song the Rose resent-  
 ful heard,  
 And shook her head.

5.

Into that amorous song there slid a  
 tear.  
 The Rose was weeping, sad at  
 heart was she.  
 But still the Nightingale with song  
 sincere  
 Sang to her in the twilight from  
 the tree.  
 "O wert thou but a bird! thou art  
 so dear,  
 Thee would I mate with, and wed  
 none but thee!"  
 "Nay," sigh'd the Rose, "I seek  
 mine absent fere,  
 A lover bold and born of high  
 degree,  
 My heart is sad because he is not  
 here,  
 Sir Scarabæus he!"

6.

The Evening Wind pass'd by, and  
 heard her boast,  
 And to the Rose he whisper'd,  
 laughing low,  
 "Poor Rose, thine absent lover  
 thou hast lost,  
 For he is faithless, and forsaken  
 thou!  
 I met him on my travels at the  
 Court  
 Of Queen Spiræa of Ulmaria.  
 The Meadow Queen is she, and all  
 amort  
 Sir Scarabæus, for her sake, that  
 day  
 Had sworn to break a lance. The  
 tilt was short,  
 I left him lying wounded in the  
 dust,  
 And only know that, by the last  
 report,  
 Thy gallant had received a mortal  
 thrust.  
 Now all the common flowers that  
 far and wide  
 Have envied thee because thou art  
 so fair  
 Are laughing at thee. But whate'er  
 betide,  
 Come thou with me, and I will  
 bring thee where  
 Thou yet mayst find him in his  
 fallen pride."  
 The poor Rose hung her head, and,  
 in despair,  
 "Had I but wings!" she sigh'd,  
 "Had I but wings!"

7.

With laughter light again,  
 "Thou hast them," that perfidious  
 Wind replied,  
 "And I will show thee how to use  
 them." Then  
 He breathed upon the Rose, and,  
 undenied,  
 Pluckt from her one by one her  
 petals fair;

But, soon dissatisfied  
 With his sweet theft, along the  
 thankless air  
 He tost the stolen petals here and  
 there,  
 And off he hied.

8.

Me for himself he would have kept.  
 But I  
 Beheld thee, as the Evening Wind  
 went by  
 Bearing me with him. To the  
 Wind I said  
 "Wait for me!" and I slid into thy  
 soul.  
 When the Wind miss'd me he be-  
 lieved me dead,  
 And so went on without me to his  
 goal,  
 Which he shall never reach, for  
 every hour  
 It changes.

From that moment I became  
 The inmate of thy thoughts. I  
 have the power  
 To perfume all the paths they  
 haunt. My name  
 Another's lips must teach thine own  
 to spell.  
 Untold I leave it, lest the Evening  
 Star  
 Should guess it in thine eyes. With  
 thee to dwell,  
 And thine to be for ever, from afar  
 I come with secrets laden, I can  
 tell  
 To none but thee. So sweet my  
 whispers are,  
 That with their fragrance fill'd is  
 every thought  
 That I have breathed on. Maiden  
 pure and fair,  
 A paradise of perfumes I have  
 brought  
 That thy sweet soul may breathe  
 in sweetest air.  
 Ah, keep it! The Soul's Fragrance  
 lost, can aught  
 That loss repair?

LINES<sup>1</sup>

COMPOSED IN SLEEP.

THIS is the place. Here flourish'd  
 Wicked Deeds  
 And wither'd, in a world without a  
 name,  
 Buried ere ours was born. Fierce  
 troops of Crimes  
 Weapon'd and crown'd, athwart a  
 desert land  
 Of wasted loveliness, to reach this  
 place  
 Travell'd in pomp: here settled,  
 and here died,  
 Grown old and weak: and, dying  
 left behind [graven  
 No chronicle upon the bare rock  
 Of what they were or what they  
 did. The lives  
 They cramm'd with evil, all their  
 wicked loves,  
 Their wicked hates, Death and  
 slow Time have turn'd  
 Into a sly grey silent ghostliness,  
 A stealthy-footed Fear, that prowls  
 for prey,  
 Creeps on the wretch who wanders  
 here unwarn'd,  
 Catches him, with long fingers, by  
 the head,  
 Nor lets him go till all his mind is  
 gone.

This was their city's tower'd acrop-  
 olis,

<sup>1</sup> These lines are the result of a slumber, not induced by any narcotic, from which the writer awoke under an extraordinarily vivid impression that he had composed in his sleep a poem of considerable length. Of the purport of the poem he retained only a vague and shadowy notion; but more than a hundred lines of it were lingering (as it seemed to him) so distinctly in his recollection that he hastened to write them down. His memory, however (or the illusion which had usurped the function of memory), suddenly and completely failed him at the point where this fragment breaks off. He has never been able to complete it; and it is printed here, without alteration, as a psychological curiosity.

This sprawling hoop of roofless  
 ruin huge  
 Whose heart is hollowness. These  
 broken ribs  
 Of crumbled stone and mounds of  
 rippling grass  
 Were walls whose builders, when  
 those walls were built,  
 Kings put to death, that none the  
 plan might tell  
 Of secret chambers cruelly con-  
 trived  
 For lust and murder: and therein  
 were born  
 Abominable pleasures. Round them  
 now  
 Rank ivy rustles with the revelry  
 Of spangled reptiles. Down in a  
 dry well  
 There hath been dwelling for three  
 thousand years  
 An old white newt, whiter than  
 leprosy.  
 He only knows the long-forgotten  
 names  
 Of those strong scarlet blossoms  
 on the brink  
 That once were Sins. . . .

## PROMETHEIA.

(FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND PRESS,  
 ET CÆTERA.)

MEPHISTOPHELES (ad spectatores).

"Am ende hängen wir doch ab  
 Von creaturen die wir machten."—FAUST.—Second Part.  
 (Birth of the Homunculus.)

## PART I.

"GOD of the Gods, and Lord of  
 Heaven! Since now  
 Repentant Power rejects not Rea-  
 son's use,  
 Here on the Path of Progress stay  
 not thou  
 Thy steps by me well-counselld!"  
 (Thus to Zeus  
 Prometheus spake.) "From Earth's  
 primordial womb  
 Mute to the birth her progeny are  
 brought.

To death they go, as into life they  
 come,  
 Condemn'd to suffer all and utter  
 nought.  
 Read in the language of their long-  
 ing eyes  
 The passionate petition of the  
 dumb,  
 And grant the long'd-for gift, mere  
 life denies,  
 A voice to Will, to Feeling, and to  
 Thought!"

But Zeus, mistrustful, murmur'd  
 "To what end?"  
 "No end of ends," he answer'd,  
 "and in each  
 A fresh beginning! for with better  
 fraught  
 Is every best, as world on world  
 ascend,  
 In ceaseless self-upliftings, life's  
 immense  
 Capacities of growth. Voice leads  
 to speech,  
 Speech to intelligence, intelligence  
 To liberty, and liberty" . . . "To  
 what?"  
 Zeus interrupted. "Ever out of  
 reach  
 Thy thoughts run on, and all thy  
 language still  
 Sounds revolutionary." "Still! why  
 not?"  
 Prometheus laugh'd. "We share  
 the imputed crime.  
 From revolutionary fountains flow  
 Fresh streams of force; and, tho'  
 enthroned sublime  
 On spoil'd Olympus, what thyself  
 wert thou  
 Without the Revolution, Son of  
 Time?"  
 "Titan," the God, with darkening  
 aspect, sigh'd,  
 "It was to ravish, not retain, a  
 throne  
 That on the Revolution we relied;  
 Wherein thy services have every  
 one

Been well requited." "Ay," Prome-  
 theus cried,  
 "Witness Mount Caucasus!"  
 "What's done is done,"  
 Zeus answer'd. "Not till thou hadst  
 turn'd our foe  
 And filch'd our fire, did we retaliate  
 thus.  
 But witness also thou, that (long  
 ago  
 Recall'd with recompense from Cau-  
 casus)  
 Thee hath our later friendship fa-  
 vour'd so,  
 That thine is now copartnership  
 with us  
 In all our own Olympian empery,  
 By thy weird wisdom guided. Why  
 discuss  
 The unalterable past? Nor thou  
 nor I  
 Fresh conflict crave. This much  
 concede." "I do,"  
 Prometheus mutter'd, "and the  
 reason why  
 Full well, Fate-driven Thunderer, I  
 know!  
 For thy reluctant power perforce  
 obeys  
 The strict compulsions of Neces-  
 sity."  
 "Her iron yoke," replied the God,  
 "she lays  
 On Gods and Titans both, and none  
 can close,  
 None ope, her hidden hand. Forget  
 the days  
 That disunited us, nor indispose  
 A confidence that fain would rest  
 assured  
 Rather in him sage Themis loves to  
 praise,  
 Than in the perjured Titan who  
 abjured  
 The cause of his own kindred."  
 "And for whose,  
 Ungrateful God?" "Nay, my Pro-  
 metheus, mine  
 The cause, I know, for which thou  
 didst change sides."

“Not thine,” the indignant Titan  
cried, “not thine!  
Nor thine nor thee, Monarch of  
Parricides  
From Sire to Son, I sought! In  
god or worm  
I care not where the sign of it I see,  
But let me find, beneath the poorest  
germ,  
Some promise of improvement, that  
to free  
A hinder’d progress to a higher term  
Needs all the aid a Titan can afford,  
And mine shall not be wanting to  
confirm  
The effort that aspires to over-  
come!”

Zeus, shaking his sheaved thunders  
at the word,  
Exclaim’d, “Inveterately venture-  
some!

Whom should the upstart over-  
come? Not me?”

“And why not thee,” Prometheus  
cried, “new lord

Of a usurpt dominion? Why not  
thee,

Thee and thy kindred all, whose  
starry home

To Kronos once belong’d, if its en-  
deavour

Of higher worth than thine and  
theirs should be?

Kronides, never have I flatter’d,  
never

Deceived thee, or betray’d! Forget  
not thou

That in the Race of Uranus for ever  
Power hath been lost and won by  
§ overthrow.

Unoverthrown, wouldst thou pre-  
serve it, dare

To rule without oppression! Fear-  
less now,

Fling the lone scepter of a world-  
wide care

Into the lap of Freedom! Safest  
thus [there

Shall its supremacy remain, for

Rebellion breathes not. Had not  
Kronos pent

Our Giant Brotherhood in Tartarus,  
His might have been (thy treason  
to prevent) [of us.

The hundred-banded help he lack’d  
Confide in Liberty, the friend of all,

And live by all befriended! With  
her, grow

From growth to growth, in a per-  
petual

Increase of growing greatness! So  
shalt thou,

Still onward borne with all that’s  
onward going,

Be never by-gone, never out of date!  
’Tis at the price of ever greater

growing  
Eternity is granted to the great.”

Zeus answer’d with an indecisive  
sigh.

“Prophet,” he said, “who, in the  
hoary Past

Where the old Gods and the old  
Ages lie,

Sole of thy kindred didst the hour  
forecast

Whick thou alone survivest, proph-  
esy

(If still the gift of prophecy thou  
hast)

What destiny for me, should I deny  
The gift thou cravest, is reserved

by Fate?”

“The sadness of immense satiety,”  
Prometheus murmur’d. “Pause and  
meditate!”

He added. “I, the Spokesman of  
the Dumb.

Am also Seer of the Unseen.” “But  
what,”

Zeus sigh’d again, “will they next  
crave, to whom

The voice to crave it hath been  
granted?” “That

Shall they themselves inform thee  
by and by,”

Exclaim’d the surly Giant, and  
thereat





<p>Thy favourite makes an admirable show — From one so beautiful exact no more!" Eos complain'd of the cock's clam- orous crow, Superfluously sounded o'er and o'er. "Prometheus might at least," she said, "for me Have managed to contrive a less absurd And indiscreetly strepitant min- strelsy Than the loud shriek of that ridicu- lous bird!" "Sweet Cousin, thine indulgence," he replied, "For the cicala's strains (I grant that these Have not as yet been duly deified) Leaves to less plaintive notes small chance to please An ear compassionately prejudiced. Sleep sounder, and wake later! What hath drawn Thy blushing charms, untimely thus enticed, O rosy-finger'd Daughter of the Dawn, From that soft couch Love's self were fain to lie on? Is it the memory of Cephalus, Or else the expectation of Orion?" With jests sarcastic curtly answer- ing thus The just reproaches of the Gods, that great Ungainly Titan strode from spot to spot, Superbly heedless of the scorn and hate His course provoked. Olympus loved him not, Despite his ancient birth and lineage high; And even the new-made Deities, whose past Was but of yesterday, with side- long eye</p>	<p>Look'd on him as a god of lower caste. The restless spirit that from his peers in Heaven Ever aloof the unquiet Giant held Had to his strenuous Titanism given A tone incongruously coarse. Im- pell'd By unintelligible vehemence, His uncouth grandeur grieved the fluent grace Of the Olympian Quiet with intense Abrupt explosive ardours; as apace On its swift course, all rough with rocks and roots, And fiercely fluttering with volcanic fire, Some ravaged morsel of a mountain shoots Across the cloven crystal of a lake In whose clear depths stars and still clouds admire The lucid forms their own reflec- tions take. Sole, Aphroditè (she, that Fairest Fair, Whose sacred sweetness from its rancorous tooth The Titan's biting wit was pleased to spare, —She for whose solitary sake, in truth, The sullen menace of his face at whiles A fond mysterious fervour un- avow'd Made soft and luminous with hov- ering smiles, Like summer lightnings thro' a sleeping cloud) Sole, Aphroditè found a curious charm In this grim God-born Mocker of the Gods; And, waving to Prometheus her white arm, She beckon'd him with amicable nods.</p>
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<p>Submissive to her signal he drew near, And with a questioning gaze the Goddess eyed. "Titan, well done!" she whisper'd in his ear; "What long on Earth I miss'd thou hast supplied. I love the lion's roar, the ring-dove's coo: By both alike love's needs are well express'd: The amorous bull's deep bellowing charms me too. But why hast thou withheld the last and best Of all thy gifts from those who, tho' but few, Most claim on thy solicitude pos- sess'd?" Prometheus, by astonishment tongue-tied, An interrogatory eyebrow raised. "Those larks and nightingales that yonder hide," The Goddess answer'd as on Earth she gazed, "Inaudible and invisible to all! Darkling they haunt the shadows round them furl'd, Silent amidst the universal brawl And babble of the emancipated world. Yet heaven is husht to hear their minstrelsy: For these the moon and stars are not too sweet, For those the sun himself is not too high: And shall they have no listeners? Hearts that beat With base emotions find ignoble voice, [ity Wrath, and Unreason, and Vulgar- Speak loud. Stupidity and Spite rejoice In utterance unrestricted. Say, then, why (Where Folly's fife with Envy's clarion vies)</p>	<p>Must these alone, the darlings of the Spring, Whose souls are fill'd with lyric ecstasies, Unheard, or even if heard un- heeded, sing?"  The Titan's eye, with a soul-search- ing glare, [sried Sounded the secret dwelling unde- In those small bosoms. "And what seest thou there?" The Goddess ask'd him. Sighing he replied "What I should have foreseen!" "But what is that?" Full on the glorious beauty of her face Prometheus gazed. "O Goddess, ask not what! Thou who, supreme in beauty and in grace, Art by adoring worlds proclaim'd divine, What kindred could thy confident godhood trace In a shy loveliness so unlike thine? A loveliness of its own self afraid, A Bastard Beauty, fearing to be seen, Yet fainting to be loved, that seeks the shade!" The Goddess laugh'd "What doth my Titan mean? What bastard is he speaking of?" And he, "Ay, 'tis a Beauty bastard-born, and not Authentically certified to be, A Beauty surreptitiously begot From Heaven's embrace of Earth, and breathing, see, Between them both in secrecy and shame An unacknowledged life!" "But what," said she, "Is this poor Heaven-born Earth- child's luckless name?" "Its name," Prometheus sigh'd, "is POESY."</p>
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"A woman?" "No." "A man,  
 then?" "Ah, still less!"  
 The glorious sexual Goddess blush'd  
 outright,  
 "Is Hermes, then, a father?"  
 "Nay, my guess  
 Divines not Hermes." "Zeus,  
 then? am I right?"  
 "I doubt . . ." "If there's a doubt,  
 'tis Zeus! Suppress  
 The father's name, however. Well  
 we know  
 The mother is the love-tale's text,  
 of course,  
 The father but the pretext. Name  
 the mother!"  
 "But thou wouldst not believe me  
 . . ." "Worse and worse!  
 'Tis Herè, then?" "Not Herè."  
 "There's no other  
 Of whom the thing's incredible—  
 unless  
 Perchance 'tis Pallas?" "No alas,  
 not she!"  
 "And why alas?" With keen sug-  
 gestiveness,  
 For sole reply the Titan glowingly  
 Gazed on the Goddess, till she  
 blush'd again,  
 "Matchless impertinent!" But he,  
 unmoved,  
 "Goddess, I warn'd thee that thou  
 wouldst not deign  
 To give me credit . . ." "For such  
 pert unproved  
 Assertion? Fie, to say it to my  
 face!"  
 "But I said nothing." "And yet  
 all implied.  
 What next, I wonder!" "Queen  
 of every grace  
 And all that's beautiful," Prome-  
 theus cried,  
 "Tell me *thy* parents!" "Known  
 to all are they, [divine."  
 Zeus and Dione, both of them  
 "They!" cried the Titan, "they  
 thy parents? Nay,  
 Great and dear Goddess, beauty  
 such as thine

Had nobler birth! Those stupid  
 Gods are not  
 The true begetters of a deity  
 Above their own. 'Twas otherwise  
 begot.  
 Slid from the starry bosom of the  
 sky,  
 A single drop of sacred ichor pure,  
 The mystic blood of Uranus, con-  
 tain'd  
 In one bright bead thy whole pro-  
 geniture:  
 Hid in the heart of Ocean it re-  
 main'd  
 Till there it brought thy wondrous  
 self to birth:  
 And, even so, one glimpse of  
 Heaven unstain'd,  
 That fell reflected in a glance from  
 Earth  
 To Heaven uplifted, this new  
 Beauty bore—  
 Which hath no sex, no mother, and  
 no sire,  
 No kin on Earth, no home in  
 Heaven—nay more,  
 'Tis neither man nor woman, but  
 the soul,  
 Of the wide world's unsatisfied de-  
 sire.  
 And thro' the universe, without a  
 goal,  
 Its hungering heart must wander  
 high and higher,  
 Till from the Gods it gain (as I,  
 for those  
 Poor mortals yonder, snatch'd from  
 Zeus his fire)  
 The immortality they dread to  
 lose."

"But this new Beauty, do those  
 bosoms small  
 Enshrine it?" ask'd the Goddess.  
 "Ah, subdued,"  
 Prometheus murmur'd bitterly, "by  
 all  
 The vulgar voices of the multitude  
 That loves its own monopoly of  
 noise,

No homage hath the homeless one  
 on Earth!  
 And vainly its unanswer'd song  
 employs  
 The gift I gave. In darkness and  
 in dearth,  
 By noise and glare engirt, unheard  
 it sings,  
 Unseen it stirs. For this, from  
 Zeus I craved,  
 What he denies me still, the gift of  
 wings —  
 For birds — birds only — that in  
 some sweet bird  
 Life's sweetest voice, from Earth's  
 loud hubbub saved,  
 Might soar in song to Heaven, and  
 there be heard.  
 Never while man breathes mortal  
 breath shall he,  
 The Earthborn, hand or foot from  
 Earth withdraw:  
 For there uplifted must his king-  
 dom be  
 By agelong labour. Language,  
 there, and Law  
 Hath he to found; create, for social  
 power  
 And spacious trade, the Senate and  
 the Mart;  
 Establish Science in her starry  
 tower,  
 And mint the glowing miracles of  
 Art.  
 Such is the task by me for man de-  
 sign'd!  
 But ever, as on Earth his task he  
 plies,  
 Higher than foot and hand must  
 heart and mind,  
 Uplifted o'er the earthly labour,  
 rise.  
 Let mind and heart, then, heaven-  
 ward pathways find  
 Upon the wings of every bird that  
 flies,  
 While hand and foot stay fast to  
 Earth confined;  
 Lest Earth should laply lose her  
 fairest prize,

The hand of man: whose fingers  
 five shall bind  
 Together all that his five wits' re-  
 joice  
 To wrench from Time's tenacious  
 treasures,  
 As, guided onward by a wingèd  
 voice,  
 Earth's wingless lord to his high  
 future hies!"

## PART III.

The Titan quiver'd. Strenuous tre-  
 mours ran  
 Thro' his huge limbs, rocking their  
 heaviness  
 Like wind-rack'd oaks; and his  
 deep eyes began  
 To glow with a prophetic passion.  
 "Yes!  
 And then," he murmur'd, "then the  
 Race of Man  
 (Taught by that wingèd voice)  
 perchance may guess.  
 The giant purpose, the stupendous  
 plan  
 That, brooding o'er its cloudy  
 cradle, I  
 Have for the infant fashion'd.  
 Changeless Gods,  
 What profits you your immortality?  
 Thro' endless self-repeating periods  
 To be the same for ever, is to be  
 For ever lacking life's divinest gift,  
 The faculty of growth. No inch  
 can ye [uplift.  
 Your future o'er your present selves  
 What good in such prolong'd inep-  
 titude?  
 But to be ever growing young again,  
 From age to age eternally renew'd  
 With breath new-born, and ardour  
 to attain  
 Goals ever new, by courses never  
 done.  
 — This gift, to gods ungiven, or  
 given in vain,  
 My forethought hath reserv'd for  
 man alone!

Death was the blind condition jealous Zeus,  
 To balk my purpose, on mankind imposed,  
 But Death my purpose serves: for  
 Death renews  
 Man's youth, whose course old age  
 might else have closed.  
 Unprescient God, 'tis well thou  
 couldst not guess  
 That to these hands the fetter  
 forged by thee  
 Gave all required by their inventiveness  
 To shape the sword that cuts each  
 fetter free!

MANKIND MUST DIE! The fiat forth  
 is gone.  
 Die? When I heard that word of  
 doom proclaim'd,  
 More self-restraint I needed to suppress  
 A shout of joy, than when my  
 strangled groan  
 Burst not the bitten lips its anguish  
 shamed,  
 And not a cry revealed the dumb  
 distress  
 Of my Caucasian martyrdom. By  
 Death  
 The Race of Man shall be from age  
 to age  
 Replenisht with the perdurable  
 breath  
 Of endless birth, and vigour to  
 engage  
 In ventures new. Death's sickle,  
 as it reaps  
 The old grain, to the young the soil  
 restores,  
 And still the harvest springs, and  
 the soil keeps  
 Still fresh for growth its disencumber'd  
 pores.  
 A man is dead, long live Mankind!  
 From soul  
 To soul each life's acquest triumphantly  
 Passes in sure succession. Ages  
 roll,

And in a hundred ages (what care!  
 How many births as many deaths  
 succeed?)  
 Man's Race, enrich'd a hundredfold  
 thereby,  
 Remains as young as ever. Oft  
 with heed  
 Have I the Ocean watch'd, and  
 watch'd the shore.  
 The sand, rejected by the wave's  
 wild shock,  
 Gathers in heaps and, growing more  
 and more,  
 And high and higher, hardens till at  
 last  
 The wave returning breaks upon a  
 rock,  
 And is itself rejected. Tost and  
 cast  
 By Time's recurrent waves, son  
 after sire,  
 From death to death, like that sea-  
 driven sand,  
 Grains of Humanity, with past on  
 past  
 Your greatening future pile, and  
 high and higher,  
 Based on each others' buried should-  
 ers, stand!"

"What art thou muttering?"  
 Aphroditè said.  
 "Mysterious dreamer, dost thou  
 meditate  
 The Gods' destruction?" High his  
 shaggy head  
 The Titan lifted, and replied elate,  
 "Not thine, Anadyomenè, not  
 thine!  
 Passion's imperishable autocrat,  
 Thee only of the Gods I deem  
 divine,  
 And permanent is thy sweet power  
 as Fate.  
 Receive mine oath, and aid me!"  
 "How? In what?"  
 "Inspire in Zeus the wish to be a  
 bird  
 That he may woo a mortal."  
 Letting fall

Sweet lids o'er sunny eyes as this  
she heard,  
The Goddess smiled, and answer'd  
"Is that all?"

## PART IV.

Pretentious patrons of mankind,  
what pranks

However monstrous has your pride  
disdain'd

For pushing forward its own pur-  
pose? Thanks

To your activity, what tears have  
stain'd

The trophies of man's progress!  
What a sea

Of blood, to float your cockle-boats,  
been shed!

Your fellow man from prejudice to  
free,

Your fellow man's incorrigible head  
Have you chop'd off with philan-  
thropic glee,

By basketfuls, benign Philanthro-  
pists!

And, promising a better life instead,  
This life have you, evangelising  
Priests,

With penance fill'd! Your famed  
philosophies,

By way of throwing light on what  
men find

Compassionately dark, burn out  
their eyes,

Vaunting Philosophers! In vain  
mankind

For refuge from its benefactors  
sighs.

His purposes humane the Titan's  
mind

Found less inhuman means to real-  
ise.

He merely made a god ridiculous.  
When Zeus had, for the sake of  
Gaunymede,

Assumed an eagle's form, succumb-  
ing thus

To Aphroditè's influence, thro' that  
deed

The Son of Asia and Iäpetus  
His end attain'd. For how thence-  
forth could Zeus

(Plagued by the importunate solicit-  
ings

Of such a crafty counsellor) refuse  
Even to the meanest bird a pair of  
wings?

Promiscuous benefits can rarely  
claim

A better origin. To elevate  
One favourite, lest it should incur  
the blame

Of personal preference in affairs of  
State,

Some dozen mediocrities as high  
The Crown must needs advance.

If, still irate,  
The Public Voice protests, to brave  
its cry

There are at least thirteen instead  
of one:

The wrong, moreover, that is done  
thereby

To no one in particular is done:

'Tis but a general calamity,  
And that is an indignity to none.

Yet vast and irremediable was  
The failure of Prometheus. From  
the day

He universalised the voice, alas,  
Whilst every vulgar brute could say

his say,

To souls refined and delicate re-  
main'd

No refuge from the hubbub all  
around

But their own silence: and such  
souls refrain'd

(Dumfounded quite by a disgust  
profound)

From audible utterance. The loqua-  
cious zest

Of Earth's coarse crowd had in the  
finer few

Life's highest note unknowingly  
suppress'd.

That was the Titan's first mistake.  
A new

<p>And worse one he fell into, in his quest Of means to mend it: for he did but brew A base resentment in the human breast By giving wings to birds. Man's envy drew Between the smallest sparrow and himself Comparisons, from one grudging point of view, Displeasing to the self-conceited elf. A third mistake Prometheus might have then Committed, and from Zeus in some weak mood The envied gift of wings for envi- ous men Perchance obtain'd, had Man's In- gratitude Not prematurely ended his career. Mortals, and mortals to a man agreed In censuring all attempts to inter- fere With their mortality, men first de- creed The Abolition of the Gods: and here, Prometheus held their sacrilegious deed Was justifiable, altho' severe: But men no sooner from the Gods were freed, Than of a Titan's aid so sure they were Their godless freedom had no fur- ther need, That they forthwith proclaim'd it everywhere Mankind's Titanic Patron had be- come To man no more than an enormous myth; The monstrous trance of dreaming Heathendom, Not to be any longer trusted with</p>	<p>Traditional influence on the human mind. Thus, having fail'd to benefit the few, And by the ungrateful multitude malign'd, A sad self-exile, seeking to eschew The sight of his own failure in mankind, Prometheus from man's fatuous world withdrew. But first to his lame brother he re- sign'd His slighted scepter. Epimetheus sought To avenge Prometheus, and rebuke men's blind Ingratitude for gifts that cost them nought. Strict penalties to granted prayers he join'd, And punish'd with a knowledge dearly bought The pride that had disdainfully de- clined Gratuitous instruction. AFTER- THOUGHT Succeeded FORETHOUGHT as the Ruling Power Of Progress, and the Race of Man was taught A painful prudence by Pandora's dower Of ever unanticipated woes From wishes born. The formidable place Of his first martyrdom Prometheus chose For his last refuge from a thankless race. There, wandering far and farther out of sight, Along waste ways indefinite as those Traced by the shadows travelling in the flight Of silent clouds o'er solitary snows, "Rash Race of Suicides!" he mused in scorn,</p>
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"You to your own precocious appetite  
 Have fall'n a prey: your future yet  
 unborn  
 You have devour'd: and, fumbled  
 ere unfurl'd,  
 Broken is all its promise in the bud!  
 No more can I redeem you from a  
 world  
 Where Genius, bringing fire, found  
 only mud [self.  
 Wherefrom to make an image of it—  
 Ah, what to you is left for which  
 to live,  
 To toil, to suffer? Perishable pelf,  
 Lust without love, coarse pleasures  
 that contrive  
 Their own defeat, and joy that never  
 stays!  
 What with those aspirations will  
 you do,  
 Which should have been as pinions  
 to upraise  
 Humanity above the Gods? Pursue  
 The trivial tenour of your thankless  
 days  
 From things desired to things pos-  
 sessed in vain,  
 But there my gifts can aid you not,  
 I know!  
 Alas, and what will now be their  
 worse pain,  
 In whom those gifts their glowing  
 poësies  
 With aching pangs commingle? Woe  
 to you,  
 Poor children of my frustrate enter-  
 prise!  
 Poets, can you be silent?"  
 That austere  
 And somber martyr's reminiscent  
 eye  
 Survey'd the snow-ribb'd crags  
 around him there,  
 And the lost Titan murmur'd, with  
 a sigh  
 Soon frozen in their freezing at-  
 mosphere,  
 "If not . . . well, learn to suffer,  
 even as I!"

## A SIGH.

THE Passion and the pain of yore  
 Slow time hath still'd in vain,  
 Since all that I can feel no more  
 I yearn to feel again.

## NECROMANCY.

WHY didst thou let me deem thee  
 lost for years,  
 Youth of my heart? And, now  
 that I have shed  
 O'er thy false grave long-since-for-  
 gotten tears,  
 And put away my mourning for  
 the dead,  
 And learn'd to live without thee half  
 content,  
 What brings thee back alive, tho'  
 in disguise?  
 For thou, with this fair stranger's  
 beauty blent,  
 Art smiling on me thro' another's  
 eyes.

## URIEL.

## (A MYSTERY.)

## DEDICATION.

To you, the dead and gone, bright-eyed De-  
 sires  
 Whose beauty lights no more my dwindled  
 day,  
 Here, sitting lone beside forsaken fires,  
 I dedicate this lay.

## 1.

I HEARD a Voice by night, that call'd  
 to me  
 "Uriel! Uriel!"  
 The night was dark, and nothing  
 could I see,  
 Yet knew I by the Voice that it was  
 She  
 Whom my soul loves so well  
 That when She calls Her follower I  
 must be,  
 Whether She call from Heaven or  
 from Hell.

## 2.

Then to the Voice "What is thy will?" said I.  
 But for sole response thro' the darkness fell,  
 Repeated with the same importunate cry,  
 Mine own name only, "Uriel! Uriel!"  
 I could not sleep nor rest upon my bed,  
 So I rose up, and thro' the husht house pass'd  
 With steps unlighted (for my lamp was dead)  
 Out on the heath.

## 3.

That Voice flew onward fast,  
 Still calling, and still onward after it  
 I follow'd, far outsped: for there,  
 beneath  
 The moonless heaven, not even a  
 marsh-fire-lit  
 Night's fearful sameness; and  
 athwart the heath,  
 Not fast and free as flew the Voice  
 that led,  
 But halting oft, my steps went  
 stumblingly.  
 Each footstep, as it fell, recoil'd  
 with dread  
 From what it toucht; and, tho' I  
 could not see,  
 I felt that, where I trod, the plain  
 was spread  
 With corpses. Heap'd so thick  
 they seem'd to be,  
 That I, at every moment, fear'd to  
 tread  
 Upon a dead man's face. Yet, un-  
 deterr'd,  
 My feet obey'd a will not mine,  
 whose spell  
 Their course constrain'd. For still  
 that Voice I heard,  
 And still the Voice call'd "Uriel!  
 Uriel!"

## 4.

At last a livid light began to grow  
 Low down in heaven. It was the  
 moon that, pent  
 Behind a slowly crumbling cloud  
 till now,  
 Athwart thin flakes of worn-out  
 vapour sent  
 A filmy gleam. And I could see  
 thereby  
 The corpses that lay litter'd on the  
 heath.  
 Each white up-slanted face and un-  
 shut eye  
 Was staring at me with the stare of  
 death:  
 Harness'd in rusty mail from head  
 to heel  
 Was each dead body: and each dead  
 right hand  
 Grasp'd by the hilt a blade of blood-  
 stain'd steel,  
 But broken was each blade. And,  
 while I scann'd  
 Those dead men's faces, I began to  
 feel  
 A sadness which I could not under-  
 stand:  
 But unto me it seem'd that I had  
 seen,  
 And known, and loved them, some-  
 where, long ago:  
 Tho' when, or where, and all that  
 was between  
 That time and this (if what per-  
 plex'd me so  
 With mimic memories had indeed  
 once been)  
 I knew no longer. On this fatal  
 plain  
 Vast battle must have once been  
 waged, so keen  
 That none was spared by the relent-  
 less foe  
 For unmolested burial of the slain.

## 5.

And, as I gazed upon them, won-  
 dering why

These unrememberable faces seem'd  
 Mysteriously familiar to mine eye,  
 The cloudy light that on their corse-  
 lets gleam'd  
 Grew clearer, and a sound began to  
 swell  
 Moaning along the heath: the  
 swarthy sky  
 Was scourged by a strong wind: the  
 moonlight stream'd,  
 Flooding the land: and on the dead  
 men fell  
 Its frigid splendour. Then stark  
 upright rose  
 Each dead man, shouting, "Uriel!  
 Uriel!"  
 And in the windy air aloft all those  
 Arm'd corpses waved their shatter'd  
 swords.

6.

I cried,  
 "What are ye? and what name is it  
 you bear?  
 Corpses or ghosts? Is Life with  
 Death allied,  
 To breed new horrors in this hideous  
 lair  
 Of Desolation?" And they all re-  
 plied  
 "Thine is our name, for thine our  
 Legions were,  
 And thine would still be, if thou  
 hadst not died.  
 But corpse or ghost thou art thy-  
 self, and how  
 Should we thy death survive? It is  
 not well  
 When the dead do not know the  
 dead, nor know  
 The date of their own death-day,  
 Uriel!  
 Our leader bold in many a fight wast  
 thou,  
 And we fought bravely. But thy  
 foes and ours  
 Were strongest. And the strife is  
 over now,  
 And we be all dead men. And those  
 tall towers

We built are fallen, all our banners  
 torn,  
 All our swords broken, all our  
 strong watch fires  
 Quencht, and in death have we been  
 left forlorn  
 Of sepulture, tho' sons of princely  
 sires,  
 Born to find burial fair with saints  
 and kings,  
 Where, over trophied tombs, the  
 taper shines  
 On tablets rich with votive offerings,  
 And priestly perfumes soothe the me-  
 morial shrines.  
 And that is why we cannot find re-  
 pose  
 In the bare quiet of unburied death;  
 But ever, when at night the wild  
 wind blows  
 Upon the barren bosom of this heath,  
 Our dead flesh tingles, and revives,  
 and glows  
 With the brief passion of a bor-  
 row'd breath,  
 Breathed by the wind: and on as the  
 wind goes  
 Go with the wind we must, where'er  
 that be,  
 A lonesome pilgrimage along the  
 night,  
 Till the wind falls again, and with  
 it we.  
 Farewell!"

7.

The wild wind swept them from my  
 sight  
 Even as they spake, and all the  
 heath was bare.  
 Sighingly the wind ceased. The  
 night was still.  
 The dead were gone. Only the  
 moonlight there  
 Upon the empty heath lay clear and  
 chill.  
 Then I remember'd long-forgotten  
 things,  
 And all my loss. I could no farther  
 fare

Along that haunted heath; for my  
heart's strings  
Were aching, gnaw'd by an immense  
despair.

Flat on the spot where last they  
stood I fell,  
And clutch'd the wither'd fern, as  
one that clings  
Fast to a grave where all he loved  
lies dead,  
And wept, and wept, and wept.

“Rise, Uriel,”  
The Voice I knew still call'd, “and  
follow me!”

But I could only weep, so vast a well  
Of tears within me flow'd. At last  
I said,

“What heart or hope have I to fol-  
low thee?

Are not the Legions lost, that at thy  
call

To mine own overthrow and theirs  
I led?

For I have seen again their faces all,  
And death was all I saw there.”

“Let them be!”

The Voice replied. “The dead  
shall live again

When we have reach'd the goal  
whereto I go,

And there shalt thou rejoin them.  
Nor till then

Canst thou thyself return to life, for  
thou

Thyself' art also fall'n among the  
slain.

But look upon me, faithless one,  
and know

That I am life in death, and joy in  
pain,

And light in darkness.”

8.

I look'd up, and saw,  
In glory that was not of mere moon  
light,

(Glory that fill'd me with a great  
glad awe)

Shining above me, Her my soul  
loves well,

Like a white Angel. And along the  
night

Her voice still call'd me “Uriel!  
Uriel!”

Again I follow'd. And it seem'd  
that days,

And nights, and weeks, and months,  
and years went by,

As on we went by never-ending ways  
Thro' worlds and worlds. And ever  
was mine eye

Fixt on that beckoning Form with  
faithful gaze.

And seasons little cared for — shine  
or shade,

Or heat or cold — pursued us.  
Many a Spring,

And many a Summer, many an Au-  
tumn, stay'd

My panting path, and round me  
strove to fling

Their fervid arms, and many a Win-  
ter made [cling

His frozen fingers meet and fiercely  
In lean embrace that long my course  
delay'd,

And Pain and Pleasure both essay'd  
to wring

My purpose from me. But still,  
sore afraid

Lest I should lose my Guide by tar-  
rying,

Forward I press'd whenever the  
Voice said

“Uriel! Uriel! linger not!”

9.

At last

We reach'd what seem'd the end of  
a dead world.

Wall'd round it was by mountains  
bare and vast,

And thro' them one thin perilous  
pathway curl'd

Into an unknown land of ice and  
snow,

Where nothing lived, nor aught was  
left to freeze

But frost. There was a heap of  
bones below;

Above, a flock of vultures. Under these,  
 Hard by a stream that long had ceased to flow,  
 A miserable, squalid, lean old man,  
 Nursing a broken harp upon his knees,  
 Sat in the frozen pass. His eyes were wan,  
 But full of spiteful looks. She my soul loved,  
 Fair as a skyward Seraph on the wing,  
 Before me up that perilous pathway moved,  
 Calling me from above, and beckoning.  
 But he that sat before the pass began  
 To twang his harp, which had but one shrill string,  
 (Whose notes like icy needles thro' me ran)  
 And with a crack'd and creaking voice to sing  
 "O fool, infatuated fool, forbear!  
 For yonder is the Land of Ice and Snow,  
 And She is dead that beckoneth to thee there, [know."  
 And dead forever are the dead I

Whilst thus that lean old man, with eyes aglare,  
 Sang to his broken harp's one string below,  
 The vultures scream'd above in the bleak air  
 "Dead are the dead forever!"

10.

"What art thou, Malignant wretch?" I cried. The old man said  
 "I am the Ancient Porter of this Pass,  
 Beyond which lies the Land of Ice and Snow.  
 And all the dwellers in that land are dead,

And dead forever are the dead I know.  
 And this, my harp—I know not when, alas!  
 But all its strings were broken long ago,  
 Save one, which time makes tough.  
 The others were  
 Of sweeter tone, but this sounds more intense.  
 And, for my name, some say it is Despair,  
 And others say it is Experience."

Thereat he laugh'd, and shook his sordid rags,  
 And his wan eyes with sullen malice gleam'd.  
 And loud again, upon the icy crags,  
 In that bleak air above, the vultures scream'd.

## SCORN.

## 1.

DIM on its slighted altar died  
 The sacred fire no victim fed:  
 The god, who craved a gift denied,  
 His own dread image seized instead:  
 And headlong he hurl'd it the flames among,  
 Thus choosing rather self-immolation  
 Than a form that in vain to a faithless throng  
 From his shrine appeal'd for a grudging oblation.  
 The flames around it wreathed:  
 The image was consumed,  
 And into ashes fell.  
 The god upon them breathed,  
 Their fading spark relumed,  
 And utter'd this oracle:—

## 2.

"Go, dust wherein my power hath dwelt,  
 Avenge on man a wrong divine,

And the proud pain a god hath felt  
 In some poor human soul en-  
 shrine!"  
 The roused ashes arose and went  
 forth on the wind:  
 The divinity hid in them, high  
 and low  
 Hovering, sought where its force  
 might find  
 Means to greaten, and grow, and  
 glow.  
 A soul it found at last,  
 A great soul wrong'd by fame,  
 A grandeur grown forlorn:  
 Into that soul it past  
 Burningly, and became  
 Wrong'd Grandeur's angel,  
 SCORN.

## STRANGERS.

(A RHAPSODY.)

CHILDREN are born, about whose  
 lucid brows  
 The blue veins, visibly meandering,  
 stream  
 Transparent: children in whose  
 wistful eyes  
 Are looks like lost dumb creatures  
 in a crowd,  
 That roam, and search, and find not  
 what they seek.  
 These children are life's aliens.  
 The wise nurse  
 Shakes her head, murmuring "They  
 will not live!"  
 A piteous prophecy, yet best for  
 them  
 The death that, pitifully premature,  
 Remits the pitiless penalty of birth;  
 Letting the lost ones steal away  
 unhurt,  
 Because unnoticed, from a world  
 not theirs.  
 Strangers and star-born strayaways  
 forlorn,  
 Who come so careless of the out-  
 landish wealth

You carry with you, dropping as  
 you go  
 Treasures beyond the reach of  
 Orient Kings,  
 What seek you here where your un-  
 valued gifts  
 Shall leave you beggars for an alms  
 denied?  
 Earth yields not their equivalent.  
 No field  
 So profitless but some poor price it  
 hath;  
 A spurious picture or a spavin'd  
 horse  
 May find in time their willing pur-  
 chasers;  
 But never for its worth shall you  
 exchange  
 A soul's unmarketable opulence.  
 And when at last, of those who (un-  
 enrich'd  
 By your improv'ishment) the gift  
 forget,  
 Your thirst and hunger crave a  
 broken crust,  
 A drop of water from the wayside  
 well,  
 Stripes shall correct such importu-  
 nities.  
 Linger not! live not! give not!  
 Hide your gifts,  
 Ungiven, deeper than Remembrance  
 digs  
 Among the haunted ruins she ex-  
 plores  
 For riches lost. And if abrupt mis-  
 chance  
 Their buried store reveal, without  
 a blush  
 Disown it, for a lie may sometimes  
 save  
 A miser's life. The truth would  
 serve as well,  
 Were truth not unbelievable; for,  
 stored  
 In coin not current here and gems  
 unprized,  
 Your treasures are worth nothing to  
 the wretch

They tempt to make them, by a murder, his.

But this the assassins know not, and ill-arm'd,

Ill-arm'd and worse than weaponless, are you!

To whose inefficacious grasp was given

In solemn mockery the seraphic sword

That only archangelic hands can hold.

Your own have clutch'd it by the burning blade,

And, when you wield it, 'tis yourselves you wound.

\* \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* \*

You that have FEELING, think you to have all?

Poor fools, and you have absolutely nought!

In reckonings of this world's arithmetic

Everything else is something by itself,

FEELING alone is nothing. Could you add

That nothing to what counts for anything,

Forthwith a tenfold potency perchance

The unreckonable zero might bestow [boots

Upon the reckon'd unit. But what A value so vicarious?

Yours the spell  
Whose all-transfiguring sorceries

Convert the dust man grovels in to gold;

Robbing the pauper royal in the pomp

Of princely exultations, changing night

To morning, death to life, the wilderness

To paradise; beatifying pain,  
Cleansing impurity, and strewing thick

The gulphs of Hell with starry gleams of Heaven.

But use it not! Unsanction'd miracles

Are sentenced sins. Writ large for all to read,

About the world's street corners  
Reason posts

"BEWARE OF THE MIRACULOUS!"  
Whereto

Prudence appends, the placard to complete,

"MIRACLES ARE FORBIDDEN!" Use it not.

Your gift unblest! Lo, Virtue's High Priest comes,

Calls the Sanhedrim's long-phylacteried train,

Consults the scripted scrolls,  
within them finds

No warrant for the wonders you perform,

And them and you doth anathematise.

Linger not! live not! give not! All your gifts

Shall turn to stones and scourges in the hands

That crave them, and to live is to be lost.

\* \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* \*

Thou starry snowflake, whose still flight transforms

The frozen crystal's constellated crown

To an ethereal feather, seek not here,

Celestial stranger, seek not here on earth,

Where Purity were nameless but for thee,

The warmth that wastes, the fervours that defile!

Upon our wither'd branches hang not thou

Thy votive wreaths, nor our bleak paths invest

With thy pale presence! Vainly  
 dost thou cling  
 About our fasten'd casements,  
 vainly spread  
 So close beside our doors thy spot-  
 less couch.  
 Behind them dwells Ingratitude.  
 The voice  
 That welcomed thine arrival will  
 anon  
 Resent thy lingering, and exclaim  
 "Enough!"  
 Trust not the looks that smile, the  
 lips that sigh,  
 "I love thee!" For to-day those  
 words mean "Come!"  
 To-morrow "Go!" Men's words  
 are numberless,  
 And yet in man's speech only the  
 same word  
 Means "No" to-morrow that meant  
 "Yes" to-day.

Linger not, live not, give not, you  
 forlorn  
 Gift-laden strangers! With your  
 gifts unglven,  
 And so at least undesecrated, die!

\* \* \* \* \*  
 \* \* \* \* \*  
 \* \* \* \* \*

What fills with such invincibility  
 The frail seed striving thro' the  
 stubborn soil?  
 The sun so long one herbless spot  
 caress'd,  
 That in the darkling germ beneath  
 it stirr'd  
 A tender trouble, and that trouble  
 seem'd  
 A promise. "Can it be, the Sun  
 himself  
 Hath sought me? He so glorious,  
 he so great,  
 And I so dark, so insignificant!  
 Dear Sun, with all the strength thy  
 love reveal'd,  
 Responding to thy summons, I am  
 here!"

And the rich life of granaried Lybia  
 glows  
 Revelling already in a single grain.  
 Doth the Sun answer, "Little one,  
 too much  
 Thou hast responded, now respond  
 no more?"  
 No, for throughout the illimitable  
 heights  
 And deeps of boundless Being, to  
 attain  
 It scarce suffices, at the most and  
 best,  
 To tend beyond the unattainable,  
 And too much love is still not love  
 enough.  
 The Sun may set, but all his rising  
 wrought  
 To life's enraptured consciousness  
 remains.  
 The Sun disowns not, even when  
 he deserts,  
 What he put forth his fervours to  
 evoke.  
 Man's love alone its doing disavows,  
 And makes denial of its dearest  
 deed.

\* \* \* \* \*  
 \* \* \* \* \*  
 \* \* \* \* \*

Beneath a dead bird's long-uncared-  
 for cage,  
 That hangs forgotten in the clois-  
 ter'd court  
 Of some lone uninhabitable house,  
 From the chink'd pavement slowly  
 creeping comes  
 A thin weak stem that opens like a  
 heart,  
 And puts forth tenderly two tiny  
 hands  
 Of benediction to that cage forlorn,  
 Then dies, as tho' its little life had  
 done  
 All it was born to do. The flint-set  
 earth  
 Requires the dead bird's gift — one  
 casual seed,



And from her stony breast a blossom blows.

But, pouring forth Uranian star-seed, strew  
Incipient heavens thro' all the hollowness

Of human gratitude for gifts divine,

And nothing from the sowing of such seed

Shall blossom but the bitterness of death.

\* \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* \*

O that the throbbing orb of this throng'd world,

The sun-led seasons, the revolving years,

Day with his glory, night with all her stars,

The present, and the future, and the past,

And earth, and heaven, should but a bauble be!

The unvalued gift of an extravagant soul,

Given undemanded, broken by a breath,

The sport of one exorbitant desire,

The easy spoil of one minute mischance,

And all for nothing! What? the unheedful flint

Spares room to house the blossom that requites

A chance seed fallen from a dead bird's cage,

And nothing, nothing, in the long long years,

That bring to other losses soon or late

The loss of loss remember'd, shall arise? [tear,

Nothing, not even a penitential A fleeting sigh, a momentary smile,

The benediction of a passing thought

Of pitiful remembrance—to repay  
The quite-forgotten gift of too much love!

\* \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* \*

All other loss comparison avails  
To lessen, and all other ills worse ill

May mitigate. Defeated monarchs find

Cold comfort left in Cæsar's legions lost:

The ruin'd merchant in the bankrupt State:

The bedless beggar in the bed-rid lord.

The sight of Niobe dries many tears,

And by the side of open graves are graves

Long seal'd, like old wounds cicatrised by time.

But this is an immitigable ill,  
A lastingly incomparable loss,

A forfeiture of refuge that exiles  
Its victim even from the lonest lodge

Where Misery's leprous outcasts may at least

Commiserate each other. The excess  
Of one o'erweening moment hath usurpt

The whole dominion of eternity;  
Yet even the usurpation was a fraud,

For what seem'd all was nothing;  
and its dupes,

Who mourn that moment's loss,  
have with it lost

The right to say that it was ever theirs.

\* \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* \*

Sceptic, approach and, into this abyss

Of torment gazing, tremblingly believe! [proof

Behold in Hell the soul's appalling

Of her dread immortality! What  
 else  
 Could for a moment undestroy'd endure  
 The least of such annihilating  
 pangs?  
 Transmute them into corporal sufferings. Hurl  
 Their victim from the visionary top  
 Of some sky'd tower, and on its  
 flinted base  
 Shatter his crumpled carcass: if the  
 heart  
 Still beats, lay bare each lacerated  
 nerve  
 And sear with scorching steel the  
 sensitive flesh:  
 Or lift the bleeding ruins of the  
 wretch,  
 Lay them in down, bandage with  
 cruel care  
 The broken limbs, and nurse to life  
 again  
 Their swooning anguish: then from  
 eyes that burn  
 Chase slumber, and to lips that  
 parch deny  
 Release from thirst. It boots not!  
 Flesh and blood  
 Death to his painless sanctuary  
 takes,  
 And life's material mechanism stops.  
 The first pang is the last. But all  
 these pangs  
 (And add to these what worse, if  
 worse there be,  
 The torturer's teeming art hath yet  
 devised)  
 Attain not the tenth part of those  
 endured  
 Without cessation by the soul that  
 loves,  
 When love is only suffering. What  
 escape,  
 What refuge, from self-torment  
 hath the soul?  
 Or what for love is left unover-  
 thrown  
 By love's own overthrow?  
 The growth of love,

Outgrowing the wide girdle of the  
 world,  
 Hath in itself absorb'd sun, moon,  
 and stars,  
 Life, Death, and Thought's illimita-  
 ble realm,  
 Leaving in Time no moment, and in  
 Space  
 No point, its omnipresence kindles  
 not  
 To palpitant incandescence — and  
 what then?  
 A word, nay, not so much, a breath  
 unbreathed,  
 A look, and all this universe of love,  
 Cramm'd with the curse of Tanta-  
 lus, becomes  
 A pitiless infinitude of fierce  
 Importunate impossibilities,  
 Where nothing is but what may  
 never be.

\* \* \* \* \*  
 \* \* \* \* \*  
 \* \* \* \* \*

Fond wretch, with those insatiable  
 eyes,  
 Among the ruins of a world de-  
 stroy'd  
 What art thou seeking? Its de-  
 stroyer? Look!  
 He stands before thee. And thou  
 knowst him not.  
 The traitor of thy perisht universe  
 Hath perisht with it. Nay, that  
 world and he,  
 Whose creature and creator was  
 thyself,  
 Save in thyself existed not. Away,  
 Disown'd survivor of what never  
 was!

\* \* \* \* \*  
 \* \* \* \* \*  
 \* \* \* \* \*

There is a sigh that hath no audible  
 sound, [form,  
 And, like a ghost that hath no visible  
 Breathing unheard thro' solitudes  
 unseen,

Its presence haunts the Desert of  
the Heart.

Fata Morgana! Fair Enchantress,  
Queen

Of all that ever-quivering quietness,  
There dost thou dreaming dwell,  
and there create

Those fervid desolations of delight,  
Where dwell with thee the joys that  
never were!

And, when in darkness fades the  
phantom scene,

The wizard stars that nightly trem-  
bling light

That undiscover'd loneliness are  
looks

From eyes that love no longer. All  
the winds

That whisper there are breaths of  
broken vows

And perjured promises. The pale  
mirage

That haunts the simmering hyaline  
above

Is all the work of ghosts, and its  
bright wastes

Teem with fantastic specters of the  
swoons

Of prostrate passions, hopes become  
despairs,

And dreams of bliss unblest. In  
that weird sky

There is no peace, but a perpetual  
trance

Of torturous ecstasy. Vext multi-  
tudes

Of frantic apparitions mingle there,  
And part, and vanish, waving vapor-  
ous arms

Of supplication—to each other  
lured,

And by each other pantingly re-  
pulsed.

The goblin picture of a passionate  
world

Painted on nothingness! And all  
the sands,

Heaved by the sultry sighings of  
the heart

Of this unquietable solitude,  
Are waves that everlastingly roll on  
O'er wrecks deep-sunken in a shore-  
less sea

Whose bed is vast oblivion. Out of  
sight,

Into that sea's abysmal bosom  
pour'd,

Flow all desires unsatisfied, all pains  
Unpitied, all affections unfulfill'd,  
And sighs, and tears, and smiles  
misunderstood.

There all the adventurous argosies  
that sail'd

In search of undiscover'd worlds,  
reduced

To undiscoverable wrecks, remain.  
And there perchance, at last, no  
more estranged

From all around them, since not  
stranger they

Than all things else, where all  
things else are strange.

In that wide strangeness unrejected  
rest

The world's rejected strangers—  
loves unloved,

And lives unliv'd, and longings un-  
appeas'd.

ALLEGRO, ANDANTE, ADAGIO.

1.

A SAGE had thro' the world fared far  
and wide:

And what had made on him the  
most impression,

Friends ask'd him: to whose ques-  
tion he replied

By this confession:

2.

“A traveller, whom it was my  
chance to meet

Departing and arriving. For this  
man

Mounted upon a fiery steed and  
fleet

His way began;

3.

And yet more eager even than his  
horse  
The man himself. With whip, and  
spur, and cry  
So fast he urged it on its rapid  
course  
That by and by

4.

The horse, o'er-riden, on the road  
expired.  
To go afoot its rider was con-  
strain'd;  
But now the man, although him-  
self untired,  
From haste refrain'd;

5.

And, turning neither to the left nor  
right,  
He with deliberate stride began to  
wend [night  
Right onward, resolute to reach ere  
His journey's end.

6.

A peasant proffer'd him an ass for  
sale:  
That mode of travelling seem'd not  
to his mind:  
Scornful he scan'd the beast from  
head to tail—  
'Twas lame and blind:

7.

But, since no better means remain'd,  
he bought  
And mounted it. The ass at a  
snail's pace  
Jogg'd onward awkwardly, not car-  
ing aught  
For speed or grace;

8.

Yet, all ungoaded, ere the day was  
done

It brought the traveller to his place  
of rest.

'Twas there I met him, when the  
sinking sun  
Was in the west.

9.

Mean was the hostel, but of wide  
resort.

He ask'd me how 'twas named, then  
sigh'd 'Already?'

As tho' to him the journey seem'd  
too short,

The pace too steady.

10.

Whereat I marvell'd that a man who  
show'd

Such haste at starting, and arrived  
so late,

Should sigh to quit the sorry beast  
he rode,

When reach'd the gate."

11.

The listeners, when this trivial tale  
they heard,

Found nothing in it to impress their  
mind:

For such things happen daily, they  
averr'd,

To all mankind.

12.

"And for that reason, and because  
you say

That such things happen in the  
common range

Of every man's experience every  
day,

I find it strange,"

13.

The Sage replied, "Upon his jour-  
ney bound,

That traveller started on a steed  
all fire

And mettle; yet too slow its space  
 he found  
 For his desire;

14.

And when, no longer by his courser  
 carried  
 In headlong haste, but free to pause  
 or stray,  
 He might have sometimes turn'd  
 aside, or tarried  
 To admire the way,

15.

Less haste was not more leisure:  
 the man still  
 Kept the main road, nor paused to  
 pluck a flower,  
 Or snatch a solace from the way-  
 side rill,  
 The woodland bower;

16.

Desiring only ere the day was done  
 To reach, tho' with diminisht speed  
 at best,  
 By pertinaciously still plodding on,  
 His destined rest:

17.

Yet when his sole means left were  
 those combining  
 The sloth and weakness of a griz-  
 zled ass.  
 He found the pace too swift, and  
 sigh'd, repining,  
 'So soon? Alas!'"

18.

"Your traveller was a fool," the  
 listeners cried,  
 "But what of that? 'Tis nothing  
 strange or new."  
 "My traveller was a man," the Sage  
 replied,  
 "Like all of you."

19.

"For some of you are riding," said  
 the Sage,  
 "A swift horse, your still swifter  
 spirits spurn:  
 And some an ass: some walk.  
 Youth, Manhood, Age,  
 Each in its turn,

20.

Are but the means that bring man,  
 slow or fast,  
 Whither he grieves to be. The  
 slowest pace  
 He finds the swiftest, as he nears  
 at last  
 His resting place.

21.

And only one of all the things I've  
 seen  
 More moves my wonder than this  
 traveller's lot."  
 "And what is that?" they ask'd.  
 "Yourselves, I ween,  
 Who wonder not."

THE END.



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